

ABSTRACT

MOUAT CROXATTO, CECILIA. The Discourse of the City in American and British Films between the 1930s and 1960s. (Under the direction of Haig Khachatoorian).

Traditional forms to research history of architecture have been focused on influential architects, built projects and architectonic movements. On the other hand, scholars who explore films to approach architecture have analyzed set designs, architects who collaborate with the film industry, or specific films, cities or specific architectonic projects that appear in films. This dissertation is focused on discourses of the city and explores (1) dominant discourses that helped to the popularity of certain urban and architectonic solutions, (2) conditions that helped that city's authorities promoted certain urban solutions over others, and (3) how cinema and film genres contributed to these solutions were so popular.

This interdisciplinary project understands discourses as systems of thought and practices that construct conceptual categories. Discourses work as cultural frameworks within larger systems of power, whereby truth and knowledge are produced. On the other hand, films strongly influence the construction of spatial meanings, and their analysis opens up new approaches to understanding architectonic spaces not only in terms of physical and perceptual features, but also in terms of social constructions.

The objective of this project is to understand how America and Britain have represented and commented upon the city space between the 1930s and 1960s. To achieve this goal, the study analyzes 87 films that belong to diverse genres, in order to illuminate on the one hand, the main urban and architectonic models represented on screen and the discourses associated with these models; and on the other hand, to analyze the relationship between urban discourses and film genres.

The theoretical framework is based upon the discourse analysis proposed by Michel Foucault and genre theory.

The final products will be: a framework for future inquiries that combines architectonic and film approaches to understanding how both disciplines interact in the distribution of city's discourses, and the analysis of a body of films according to their spatial models, in order to demonstrate that film genres distribute dominant discourses and function as frames that shape taken-for-granted assumptions of city's spaces.

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The Discourse of the City in American and British Films between the 1930s and 1960s

by
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my sister Catalina, my husband Hernan Marchant and my son Nicolas Kliwadenko, who encouraged me to realize this project.

BIOGRAPHY

Cecilia Mouat has a professional degree in Architecture and a MA in Documentary Films, both from the Universidad de Chile. In August 2009, she initiated a PhD in Design at the College of Design/ North Carolina State University.

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Her interests are focused on the relationship between the spatially vivid experience of the city and its representation through audiovisual media, or how the body's experience is always mediated through the things "we see on a screen."

In 2008, Cecilia Mouat obtained a grant from Finis Terrae University (Chile) for a one-year research project about the body's experience of architecture and its representation through video, as a way to illustrate that the audiovisual media is the most vivid form of architectural representation, emphasizing the body's motion and the experience of space-time.

Cecilia Mouat's publications include the articles "The Design Process and its Genre System, as a Way to Recognize, Evaluate and Promote Innovation," published in *EAAE Transactions on Architectural Education* 50, Constantin Spiridonidis and Maria Voyatzaki

(Ed) 2010, pp 297-305; the chapter “Los Espacios de Trabajo” (The Spaces of Work) published in the Yearbook of the Chilean University Finis Terrae N. 16 (December 2008) pp.37-44; and the article co-written with Hernan Marchant “Teaching and Experimenting with Architectural Design: Advances in Technology and Changes in Pedagogy” published in *EAAE Transactions on Architectural Education* 35, Constantin Spiridonidis and Maria Voyatzaki (Ed) 2007, pp 117- 125.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	IX
INTRODUCTION.....	1
RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE ERA OF COMMUNICATIONS.....	1
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURE.....	5
OBJECTIVES OF STUDY	11
LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	12
ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS.....	13
 CHAPTER 1	 14
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	14
INTRODUCTION.....	14
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	16
GENRE THEORY	26
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIUM IN GENRE THEORY	28
FILM GENRES AS CULTURAL CATEGORIES	29
FILM GENRE THEORY AND ITS RELATION TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	30
 CITY FILM	 33
CITY FILMS IN THIS PROJECT	38
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	39
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STUDY.....	40
THE CHOICE OF STUDY PERIOD	40
STEPS OF RESEARCH PROJECT	40
DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT / PART ONE	41
DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT / PART TWO	42
 CHAPTER 2	 44
URBAN DISCOURSES	44
INTRODUCTION.....	44
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AS SOCIAL AND MORAL MODELS	46
ONE HOUSE TO EACH FAMILY: THE STRATEGY OF BIOPOLITICS	52
THE URBAN PLANNER: A NEW GOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYEE	60
CONGESTION AND OVERCROWDING: THE ILLNESS OF THE INDUSTRIAL CITY	62
SOCIOLOGISTS: THE NEW EXPERTS.....	65
THE METROPOLIS AND THE THREAT OF SOCIAL INSURRECTION.....	67
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT	71
THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT	75

THE COUNTRY PLACE ERA	76
URBAN MODELS	79
THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT.....	84
ENGLISH GARDEN CITIES.....	84
GREEN AND DECENTRALIZED: THE IDEAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY.....	93
DECENTRALIZATION AND ZONING POLICIES IN AMERICA: THE LEGAL FIGURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBURBIA	96
THE BOOM OF SUBURBIA IN AMERICA.....	102
THE URBAN MODELS OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT.....	108
MODERN MODELS TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.....	110
MODERN MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN	119
BRITISH SOCIAL HOUSING	120
THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.....	125
SOCIAL HOUSING IN AMERICA	130
FINDINGS CHAPTER 2.....	135
CHAPTER 3.....	139
THE DISCOURSE OF THE CITY IN FILMS.....	139
INTRODUCTION.....	139
THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY AND ITS HOUSING MODELS IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH FILMS BETWEEN THE 1930S AND 1960S.....	146
CITY FILMS, DISCOURSES AND GENRES	171
PART 1: THE DISCOURSE OF THE METROPOLIS IN FILMS	174
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, DEAD BODIES, POVERTY, AND NON-SPACES	174
OUR CHILDREN DESERVE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE.....	210
THE CITY MUST BE RETHOUGHT, WE NEED URBAN PLANNERS!	234
STIGMATIZATION, APARTMENTS, AND THE PLACE WHERE POOR PEOPLE LIVE.....	245
PART 2: THE DISCOURSE OF SMALL COMMUNITIES IN FILMS.....	263
DISCOURSE OF SMALL TOWNS IN AMERICA: MAIN STREET, CHURCH AND CLOSENESS TO NATURE.....	264
DISCOURSE OF THE ENGLISH NEIGHBORHOOD: URBAN SPACES, GARDENS, PUBS AND FUNFAIRS	283
COZY SPACES, KITCHENS AND BEDROOMS	294
PART 3: THE SYMBOLIC DISCOURSE OF NATURE.....	305
GARDENS, LOVES, AND HOPES.....	305

FINDINGS CHAPTER 3.....	310
CONCLUSIONS.....	316
SUMMARY	316
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARCHITECTONIC FIELD.....	322
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH PROJECTS	323
REFERENCES	326

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. View of a French Phalanstery.....	47
Figure 2. Saltaire.....	50
Figure 3. Houses and Plan of Akroydon.....	50
Figure 4. Scheme of Part of Pullman's Industrial Town, Illinois, 1882.....	51
Figure 5. View of Glendale.....	77
Figure 6. Berlin Siedlung.....	80
Figure 7. Suburb in Stockholm 1933-1939.....	81
Figure 8. Garden City Diagram	85
Figure 9. Aerial View of Letchworth.....	89
Figure 10. Broadacre City by F.L. Wright.....	95
Figure 11. Aerial View of Levittown 1.....	106
Figure 12. The Cope Code Housing Model	106
Figure 13. Karl-Marx-Hof Vienna Designed by Karl Ehn,	111
Figure 14. Frankfurter Kitchen	112
Figure 15. Plan Voisin, Le Corbusier, 1925	116
Figure 16. Sullivan's Drawings of 1891.....	125
Figure 17. View of Walter Gropius' Work, in the International Exhibition of 1932 at MoMA Museum.....	127
Figure 18. Carl Mackley Houses, Philadelphia 1933-4	132
Figure 19. First Public Housing in New York, 1935	133
Figure 20. Greene Houses Brooklyn, 1946.....	133
Figure 21. Jane Adams Homes, Chicago, 1938	133
Figure 22. Pomonok Houses, Queens, New York, 1952	134
Figure 23. Williamson Houses, Brooklyn, 1938.....	134
Figure 24. Harlem River Houses, New York, 1935.....	134
Figure 25. Aerial Views of New York and its Skyscrapers in American Films.....	147
Figure 26. Aerial Views to Represent Cities	148
Figure 27. The Representation of Slums in American Films.....	150
Figure 28. The Representation of Slums in British Fiction Films	151
Figure 29. The Representation of Slums in British Documentaries	152
Figure 30. Urban Models to Solve the Problems of the Metropolis in American Documentaries	155
Figure 31. Urban Models to Solve the Problems of the Metropolis in British Documentaries	155
Figure 32. Aerial Views to Represent Solutions for the City's Growth	157
Figure 33. Imagined City in <i>The Fountainhead</i>	157
Figure 34. Imagined Cities in Documentaries	158
Figure 35. Imagined City in <i>The Way We Live</i>	159
Figure 36. Romanticized New York in <i>Love Nest</i> and <i>An Affair to Remember</i>	161
Figure 37. The Representation of Apartments in New York City	162
Figure 38. The Criminalization of the City in American Films.....	164
Figure 39. Dangerous Cities in British Films	164

Figure 40. Small Towns in American Films	165
Figure 41. Single-Family Houses in American Films	167
Figure 42. British Neighborhoods.....	168
Figure 43. Posters of New York City, 1936.....	179
Figure 44. Slum's Depiction in American Films of the 1930s	182
Figure 45. Policemen and Slums	183
Figure 46 Boys of the Street Fighting.....	184
Figure 47. Small Town Pastoralism in <i>Boys Town</i>	187
Figure 48. The Dichotomy Between City and Nature in the <i>Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</i>	188
Figure 49. Colin's Flashbacks in <i>The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</i>	189
Figure 50. The Dichotomy between City and Nature in <i>The Asphalt Jungle</i>	191
Figure 51. New Apartments in <i>One Third of the Nation</i>	193
Figure 52. "First Houses" first Public Housing Project in New York, 1935	193
Figure 53. Future Boys of the Street.....	195
Figure 54 Persecutions of Criminals in Crime Films	197
Figure 55. Headlines in Social Dramas about Kids during the 1930s	198
Figure 56. Headlines in Crime Films.....	199
Figure 57. Conviction's Documents in <i>Angels with Dirty Faces</i>	199
Figure 58. Criminal's Photographs	200
Figure 59. Dichotomy between Private Space and Public Space in <i>Panic in the Streets</i>	202
Figure 60. Non-Spaces in American Films.....	204
Figure 61. Non-Spaces in British Films.....	205
Figure 62. Dead Bodies in the Metropolis.....	208
Figure 63. Gerard Gardens in Documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s and in the Film <i>Violent Playground</i>	210
Figure 64. People Speaking to the Camera in British Documentaries.....	217
Figure 65. How Children Live in Slums.....	219
Figure 66. American Family at the New Apartment in <i>For the Living</i>	221
Figure 67 Clothes Lines in Documentary Films	222
Figure 68. Clothes Lines in British Fiction Films.....	223
Figure 69. Smokestacks in British Documentaries.....	223
Figure 70. Smokestacks in British Fiction Films.....	225
Figure 71. Children of Slums Playing in British Documentaries	225
Figure 72. Danger of Accidents for Our Children in Documentaries.....	226
Figure 73. Children of Slums in British Fiction Films	227
Figure 74. Children's Faces in Documentaries	228
Figure 75. Children's Faces in British Fiction Films	229
Figure 76. Children's Paintings in <i>The City</i>	230
Figure 77. Children Playing Safe in Documentaries	232
Figure 78. Natural Landscapes in Documentaries	235
Figure 79. Graphics in Documentaries	238
Figure 80. The Work of Planners in <i>Proud City</i>	240
Figure 81. The Status of the Planner in <i>Proud City</i>	241

Figure 82. Architects in Documentaries	241
Figure 83. New Suburbs in <i>Homes for Workers</i>	243
Figure 84. Queensbridge Project, New York, 1940.....	247
Figure 85. The Stigmatization of Apartments in Documentaries	248
Figure 86. Worker-Class Kitchens in British Fiction Films	249
Figure 87. The Representation of the British Laborer in 1960s Fiction Films	250
Figure 88. Apartments in American Comedies.....	253
Figure 89. The Symbolic Skyline of Manhattan.....	254
Figure 90. Opening Shots in <i>Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House</i>	255
Figure 91. Domestic Spaces and Work Spaces in <i>The Apartment</i>	257
Figure 92. Apartments in <i>Two for the Seesaw</i>	259
Figure 93. Apartments' Kitchens in American Films.....	260
Figure 94. Sense of Distress in British Apartments	261
Figure 95. Main Street in Small Town Films	268
Figure 96. Churches in Small Town Films	270
Figure 97. The Drugstore in Small Town Films	271
Figure 98. Social Activities in Small Town Films.....	272
Figure 99. Neighborhoods in Small Town Films.....	275
Figure 100. New Suburbs in <i>Kings Row</i>	277
Figure 101. Bailey Park and Pottersville in <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i>	278
Figure 102. The Town's Invasion by City People in <i>The Magic Town</i>	281
Figure 103. Small Town Films and their Open Boundaries to the Countryside.....	282
Figure 104. British's Neighborhoods in 1940s Films.....	284
Figure 105. Opening Sequences in <i>Million Like Us</i>	285
Figure 106. Opening Sequence in <i>This Happy Breed</i>	286
Figure 107. Neighborhood's Street in <i>It Always Rains on Sunday</i>	287
Figure 108. Opening Sequence in <i>London Belongs to Me</i>	288
Figure 109. Gardens in British Films.....	291
Figure 110. Funfairs in British Films.....	293
Figure 111. "Hollywood Provincial" Style in <i>The Women</i>	295
Figure 112. <i>Monsato House of the Future</i> Documentary	297
Figure 113. Kitchens in American Films	298
Figure 114. The Kitchen in <i>It Always Rains on Sunday</i>	299
Figure 115. Bedrooms in American Films.....	302
Figure 116. Bedrooms in British Films.....	303
Figure 117. Romance in <i>Love in a Dole</i>	306
Figure 118. Romance in <i>Room at the Top</i>	307
Figure 119. Romance in <i>A Taste of Honey</i>	308
Figure 120. Romance in <i>It Always Rains on Sunday</i>	308
Figure 121. Romance and Nature in American Small Town Films.....	309

INTRODUCTION

Researching the History of Architecture in the Era of Communications

Our era is characterized by the availability of information and the multiplicity of modes of communication. Web access, the nature of the Web, and new contexts for learning have strongly transformed education, along with the emergence of desired technological competencies for students and teachers.¹ Information sources and media resources available to investigate Design disciplines, have created options that were not imaginable before; designers have access to digital collections, audiovisual media produced during the last century, as well as, institutional documents and traditional written sources. However, this great amount of information forces us to resolve the dilemma between methodological rigor and the relevance of research findings. Elliot Eisner emphasizes the need for researchers to be connoisseurs and critics.² The word connoisseurship comes from the Latin *cognoscere*,³ which involves the ability to see and appreciate different dimensions of situations and experiences, and search for possible ways to relate one to another; in order to bring together different elements into a whole. On the other hand, criticism is the process of enabling others to see the qualities of something; as Eisner points out, “effective criticism functions as the midwife to perception. It helps it come into being, then later refines it and helps it to become more acute.”⁴

The historical research of architecture has been traditionally approached, to put it simplistically, through two main forms of analyses: the formal analysis, based on projects, which involves the analysis in situ, and/or the interpretation of graphical resources such as plans, photographs, and drawings; and on the other hand, the study and interpretation of

written sources, such as authors' biographies, etc. Both analyses are mainly focused on architects and projects.

This dissertation discusses and proposes a new methodology to study architecture, which is understood as a complement to traditional approaches, and combines three theoretical frameworks: discourse analysis, genre theory and film analysis. This approach is not focused on architects and projects, but on discourses. The originality of this approach lies in the combination of two forms of communication, the language based and the motion picture image.

The Relationship between Architecture and Cinema

Architects and filmmakers work with different media, although both build describable worlds that can be shaped and analyzed; these worlds are primarily spatial worlds. For this reason, cinema is the medium that represents more vividly the spatial condition of cities and their architecture: cinema is able to reproduce the relationship between space and time, while static representations such as photography and painting only can reproduce frozen instants of city space.

The conception of space that animated the Modern architectonic and artistic debate, especially in Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century, was strongly influenced by Einstein's Theory of Relativity, published in its first version in 1905. As Yolande Harris points out, after Einstein's theory, space and time were understood to be connected in a fundamental way, relative to the position of the individual observer. The concept of motion was understood as the possibility of multiple individual experiences of time and space.⁵

The American philosopher, Susan Longer, noted that cinema uses the photographic image, but in movement. The fixed space in photography and painting cannot alter the spatial relationships among the objects, whereas in cinema, it is possible to modify their spatial relations by camera movements, such as zoom, pan, dolly, etc.⁶

While the human body inhabits the world of real architecture in which the spatial tour is continuous, the cinematic space is projected on screen and is inhabited by the imagination. Films constitute a virtual reality, where the spectator can experience parallel spaces and different temporalities.

The camera delimits the space and frames the architectonic world of films, and the process of editing allows the spectator to connect separated spaces or break down a larger space into parts. In the earlier 1920s, the German architect Heinrich de Fries suggested that cinema is a spatial art, one in which images and spaces are united as a whole. While architecture is the art of creating real spaces, he argued, cinema must work with space's fractions.⁷ Vsevolod Pudovkin's notions of "filmic time" and "filmic space," suggest that the laws of "real" space and time condition each shot, but editing creates an emergent dimension of filmic space-time. Reality in film is created by "the conjunction of separate shots," the director unites and compresses separate elements that have recorded different points of the real to create the filmic space.⁸

Henri Bergson was the first philosopher to incorporate the term *cinema* in his discourse, in the context of his epistemological dualism between intellect and intuition. He used the term *cinematographic apparatus*⁹ as an analogy to explain how the intellect approaches reality. The camera begins with a real movement, discomposes it mechanically

into a series of static single frames and then returns the kinetic movement through the projecting apparatus. The movement that we see is according to Bergson, a reconstituted illusion.

Michel Foucault uses cinema to illustrate one of the principles of heterotopia. He distinguishes between two different types of spaces: utopias and heterotopias. While utopias are sites with no real place that present society in a perfect form and are fundamentally unreal spaces, heterotopias are real spaces, which are formed in the very founding of society, and are located outside of all places. To illustrate this concept, Foucault gives examples such as the cemetery, the library, the museum, and the cinema. He observes that cinema allows seeing the projection of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional screen. Heterotopias and films are able to juxtapose several spaces, several sites, and they break with traditional time. Heterotopic spaces and films can be opened or closed to make them penetrable, and the heterotopias's principle creates a space of illusion that exposes every real space, or on the contrary, they create a space that is other, another real space.¹⁰

The Social Construction Approach to Architecture

During the second-half of the twentieth century, the scholarly examination of space in disciplines, such as history and geography, has been moved from an approach based exclusively in terms of physical and geometrical aspects to a socio-cultural critique. This postmodernist notion that space is socially constructed is one of the characteristics that come mainly from French social theorists, such as Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu; and British geographers, such as David Harvey and Doreen Massey, and the American, Edward Soja.

Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, criticizes the previous ontologies that describe space strictly on geometrical terms or as an empty container. He argues that the notion of empty space is a construct of modern epistemology, reducing space to something physical, which only may be described and never may achieve its analytical or theoretical status. Lefebvre's project is framed in terms of the act of producing space; "(social) space," he argues, is a "(social) product."¹¹

The architect Bernard Tschumi proposes a new focus to approach the issues of space-time. Tschumi describes the two positions, the conceptual and the physical or sensory approach to space. He argues that space is no longer to be discussed in terms of the physical boundaries of Giedion,¹² but rather in the gap between "ideal space (the product of mental processes) and real space (the product of social praxis)."¹³

This redefinition of space, based on its social construction, and the gap between ideal space and real space, should move traditional urban and architectonic analysis from views centered only on the formalistic field, to more open analyses that may include mediated

forms of space, such as cinema, which have served not only to document, and make places visible, but to represent and to create meanings and values associated with those spaces.

Representation means the reproduction of something, but also means to speak or campaign for something else. Gold and Revill argue that representation is in its nature ideological; it “lies in attempting to convince others about the validity of some point of view.”¹⁴ In this sense, films carry out certain ideologies,¹⁵ understood as pervasive sets of ideas and images shared by people and used to make sense of the world around them.¹⁶

Representation in films also pervades the formal construction of historical knowledge. John Gold refers to “Grand Narratives” to these stories that unify properties and act as taken-for-granted frameworks.¹⁷ Because of their ideological nature, grand narratives, consciously or not, help to promote tendencies, stripping away complexity and ambiguity in favor of simple deterministic sequences and readily identifiable outcomes.¹⁸

The architectonic models that are shaped on screen are powerful sources of imaginary; location shooting and set design take advantage of pre-existing knowledge to represent recognizable places, which involve cultural and historical resonance. The photographic image in motion within the film encourages the viewer’s fabrication of an imaginary space-time, a cinematic place and a cinematic city, similar to the real. This fact situates the spectator in a place, where boundaries between the real and the fictional are blurred and become nebulous. From this approach, specific representations of places, cities, neighborhoods and architectonic models, cannot be seen as neutral backdrops.

Stephen Heath argues that the classic and naive thesis that film is the image of an image (of reality) excludes the question about where the image comes from, and what it is

doing in the film.¹⁹ Held, based on Louis Althusser definition of ideology, argues that ideology is the unity of real relations and imaginary relations between individuals and the real conditions of their existence, which defines the production of meaning.²⁰

If films carry meanings, different meanings can be associated with cinematic spaces. The city may be read as a symbol of a number of socially constructed conventions, such as progress, globalization, adventure, mystery, corruption, danger, and so forth. Pamela Robertson notes that whether representing real or fictional spaces, the spaces of cinema are both connotative and denotative; they carry meaning related to class, sexuality, gender, race, nationality, and more. Rather than mere backdrop, space propels and shapes narrative.²¹

Jean Baudrillard argues that films today have become merely the visible allegory of a cinematic form that has taken over everything: social and political life, the landscape, war, etc. “The form of life is totally scripted for the screen: reality is disappearing at the hands of cinema and cinema is disappearing at the hands of reality.”²²

The analysis and interpretation of architecture and space through films is so revealing and convincing, because cinematic spaces strongly contribute to the way that individuals perceive cities and their spaces, which are mediated by prevalent cultural discourses. From a historical approach, space analysis through films provides a framework to understand how people have thought about and depicted spaces around them during specific periods, cultures and countries. It also provides the nature of their spatial values, or how societies have supported or rejected certain architectonic and urban models. As Mary Corbin Sies suggests, “spaces are partly landscapes of the mind or cognitive landscapes, and only partly specific social and physical environments.”²³

Scholars such as Dietrich Newman, Donald Albrecht, Marc Lamster and Maggie Toy have edited compilations of essays about architecture in films. Andres Jansen and Arthur Ruegg published their book about Hans Richter and his 1930's modern architecture movie, and Donald Albrecht has investigated modern architecture in films. In Spain, Jorge Gorostiza has researched architects, who worked in the film industry. Other scholars such as Nezar AlSayyad, Stephen Barber, Giuliana Bruno, Emanuel Levy, Barbara Mennel, Katherine Shonfield, and others, have developed the notion of the cinematic city. Compilation of essays edited by Stuart Aitken & Leo Zonn, Mark Shiel & Tony Fitzmaurice, David Clarke, Francois Penz & Maureen Thomas, Andrew Webber & Emma Wilson, have developed the foundations for such exploration in cinematic space, creating valuable contributions to the topic.

The originality of this project is the focus on discourses, which is an unexplored topic in the architectonic field, as well as, the interdisciplinary approach for analyzing the way urban and architectonic discourses, rather than specific projects or architects, permeated film production, and were distributed through forms of mass culture.

This project intends to demonstrate that the representation of the city in American and British films between the 1930s and 1960s portray a clear dichotomy between city and country. Whereas, the metropolis is seen as a space of vice and risk, the country is idyllically shown as the best choice for living. In the context of modernity and development in both countries, this dichotomy seems to be resolved through the promotion of green suburban models.

Lila Leontidou suggests that British and American cities are represented as spaces of risk (vice), versus representations of South European and Mediterranean cities as spaces of attraction (virtue) and citizenship-founded-on-the-city. She interprets this antithesis by contrasts in the material reality of the urbanization process, exploring in what ways, alternative representations of cities, cultural identities and ideas of urbanism, are rooted in different urbanization dynamics. Leontidou suggests that the Anglo-centric definitional linkage between urbanization and industrialization, crystallized in modernity, is inadequate for understanding Mediterranean development dynamics, which have been based on culture and memory of strong urban identities, rather than industrial capitalism. This difference of cultural backgrounds is illustrated, for example, by mixed land use, which combines residence with economic and leisure activities at walking distance, and mixed social spaces. While in Britain and America, the cities' central business districts are dominated solely by economic activity and recreational spaces are concentrated in large parks, such as a Hyde Park or Central Park, Southern Europe urban landscape is interspersed with small squares for sitting and eating out, in both central and peripheral areas.²⁴ This dichotomy suggests that America and Britain see work as an activity that requires concentration and focus, and must be located entirely separate from other activities such as leisure and residence.

Corbin Sies notes that single-family houses with gardens, located in homogeneous and controlled neighborhoods, symbolize the *American Dream* itself. Urban dwellings, on the other hand, have been associated with slum housing, racial-ethnic diversity, social pathology, and the potential for civil disorder. "Since the late nineteenth century, two cultural metaphors have dominated the thinking of most North Americans...the suburban ideal and

urban slums. Both...have been coded into our cultural values, legitimized by social and cultural institutions, and are then experienced as empirical phenomena rather than as ideologies or stereotypes.”²⁵

This project suggests that American and British films between the 1930s and 1960s help to reinforce the discourse that condemns the metropolis and celebrates nature. This dissertation also suggests that this discourse not only was influenced by historical events occurred exclusively in the immediate context, but it was deeply rooted in the culture of both countries, work by accumulation, and defined the urban historical a priori of the time.

Objectives of Study

This historical and interdisciplinary project aims both to open-up traditional architectonic approaches to the city, and to illustrate that city spaces are not only the result of physical configurations, but also the result of cultural and social constructions.

The project intends to demonstrate that the methodology focused on discourses, or what has been formulated at a given moment; and representations of these discourses, or what has been portrayed at a given moment, is a powerful framework that illuminates historical aspects related with spatial values that are not evident by using traditional approaches. This project includes on the one hand, research on discourses, which allowed the emergence of urban models and housing models of Western cities, emphasizing the American and British cases; and on the other hand, it includes research on films, to illustrate that films functioned as a powerful medium to distribute spatial discourses, especially before the mass development of television.

From a theoretical approach, the study aims to illuminate the relationship between discourse analysis proposed by Michel Foucault, films analysis and genre theory. While the historic a priori crystallize knowledge in certain space and time, film genres crystallize discourses, but at the same time, they discuss immediate cultural contexts and distribute them according the most appropriate available medium; this moldable characteristic of genres permits their dynamic process of evolution.

Limitations of the Research

Understanding that the discourse of the city is a very broad topic, this dissertation does not intend to cover an exhaustive study of urban models, architectonic solutions for housing, and historic conditions; neither it intends to cover the American and British film production between the 1930s and 1960s; the task of such a project goes largely beyond the scope of this PhD dissertation. This dissertation will explore a new methodology that aims to understand totalities, rather than exhaustive research on partialities. This fact probably lays aside many aspects, but seeks to connect historical events that have been studied separately, in order to create a system of relationships between thoughts, organizations, institutions, their statements, urban regulations, urban models, and filmic representation of these models. This approach intends to see the discontinuous, heterogeneous, and many times, contradictory elements that appear in certain time and space, not to develop some form of “scientific” theory, and neither to organize the knowledge in structured, clear and hierarchical findings, but to illuminate how the urban discourse was created and distributed. As Michel Foucault points out, “genealogy has to fight the power-effects characteristic of any discourse that is regarded as scientific.”²⁶

Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 discusses the theoretical framework of the study, the research questions and their methodological considerations. The theoretical framework is based on discourse analysis proposed by Michel Foucault, the genealogical method, and genre theory, as a complementary approach to understanding discourses on films.

Chapter 2 discusses both the formation of urban discourses and urban models that defined the expansion of industrial cities during the first-half of the twentieth century. The urban models discussed are the Garden City and the models proposed by the Modern Movement in architecture. Chapter 2 also includes the analysis of lateral discourses that arose from disciplines out of the architectonic field, which functioned as convinced arguments, and contributed to create certain taken-for-granted frameworks about spatial values.

Chapter 3 discusses how city's discourses and spatial models were distributed by the film medium and by specific film genres in America and Britain between the 1930s and 1960s. This analysis intends to demonstrate that filmic representations of cities in America and Britain strongly contributed to shape taken-for-granted assumption about spatial values.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

Analyzing alternative connections between films and cities beyond traditional depictions of cities that appear on films, looking at specific architectonic projects that are shown in movies, and studying architects who worked in the film industry, this project aims to demonstrate that films function not only as the discussion of immediate cultural contexts, but also as a powerful way to distribute and reinforce dominant discourses of the city.

When I started this study, my intuition was that discourses of the city had to do with thoughts and practices that shape the ideas people have about their cities, their neighborhoods, or their domestic spaces, and I saw these thoughts and practices as part physical perceptions and part social constructions. I noticed for example, that conventional historiography tends to explain city changes through evolutionary models, as a perfect succession of natural transitions, from little village to metropolis. Evolutionary models explain suburbanization, or the city expansion outwards into agricultural land, by processes related to technologies of public transportation, such as railways and parkways, or by the affordability of motorcars, especially in America. Other explanations are focused on economic variables, such as high values of city-center land, which might pressure the extension of city limits.

I recognize that all these aspects contributed to the city's changes, but my intuition was that they did not appear as "natural" responses. Suburbanization with low densities, for example, was not necessarily the natural way to grow. There were a number of other

solutions to solve the city's problems at the time. However, communitarian buildings and high-density constructions within inner areas of the city have been commonly associated with both political systems with strong state intervention, and social housing developments. On the other hand, suburban models that provide single-family houses have been commonly linked with liberal economies and democratic states. I wanted to explore how these common associations could be the response of a series of discourses, which function as the form of "Grand Narratives" and tend to act as taken-for-granted frameworks.

I also realized that film theorists tend to explain the emergence of certain genres that speak about cities, by relying on contingent facts that supposedly define their emergence. For example, *Film Noir*, which depicts the city as a dangerous place, is commonly related to World War II, the fear of the atomic bomb or the presence of German film directors who were strongly influenced by the Expressionist Movement. The suburban comedies are also related to the boom of suburbanization, which occurred in America after the World War II. I am not arguing that these facts did not influence the emergence of these genres, but I am also interested in a process of discourse formation that links these films to broad cultural categories, which shape the historical a priori of the time. My intuition was that it is not a process that may be explained only by a direct and linear historical cause-effect, but by a complex net of relationships between dissimilar elements.

The theoretical framework and the methodology for this study had to offer on the one hand, an open system, which could gather dissimilar disciplines such as film theory, urban theory, genre theory, and historical analysis; and on the other hand, it also needed open methods for data collection.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The discourse analysis elaborated by Michel Foucault understands discourse as a historical phenomenon. His analysis involves research into the historical conditions and the power relations that interact in a particular time period, and facilitate the emergence of certain discourses.

From this approach, discourses are shaped through nets of relationships between dissimilar elements that do not have necessarily linear and causal successions. The elements that form a discourse are not connected by general rules; neither do they present horizontal coherence between their elements.¹ Foucault calls this approach *Historical Discontinuity*, establishing non-traditional connections between disciplines, and opening up the exploration of new relations among apparently disconnected events. The historical discontinuity framework and the genealogical approach are not focused on authors (film directors, and/or architects), but instead certain discourses and their rules of formation. These discourses are shaped through nets of relations between dissimilar elements, such as_ (1) Urban planning, as a regulatory institution supported by the government; (2) Urban models that define types of neighborhoods, and/or city growth; (3) Urban regulatory laws, such as zoning uses, which operate as strategies and tactics of power/government that seek to use space for particular ends; (4) The process of systematization and distribution of the discourses that allow them as games of truth or take-for-granted frameworks (for example the planner who recommends certain urban models, the sociologist who opines what are the best forms of human communities, or films that represents urban models associated with certain forms of social life); and (5) The process of *subjectivation*, which articulates the learned discourses as

knowledge and as the production of political subjectivities and self-forming subjects. The *subjectivation* has to do with the way individuals perceive themselves and understand the world they live in, and how taken-for-granted frameworks explain the events that surround them.

The historical discontinuity permits us to understand that discourses are formations that occur through a process of accumulation.

Gaston Bachelard first introduced the notion of historical discontinuity,² in response and critique to Auguste Comte's *positivism*, which considered science as a continual progress. The French philosopher Bachelard redefined alternative readings of history and its discursive possibilities. He called "epistemological obstacle" to all residual discourses, part of previous discourses that do not permit the consolidation of new knowledge, blocking options for opening a new *episteme*. Foucault calls the notion of discontinuity "anonymous discursive functions," that are the precursor to certain discursive practices, certain norms of functioning, which are imposed as conditions and govern any discursive practice.

Foucault's foundational book *The Archeology of Knowledge*, first published in French in 1969, explains the context from which the notion of historical discontinuity emerged. In *The Archeology*, Foucault explains the tools that he had used in his great investigations,³ and presents his vision about discourse, from the anonymous rules that define its apparition, to the rules that define its conditions of existence.

Foucault considers the author as an operator, an emergency surface, who is not only exposed to certain discursive practices, but is at the same time, the response and result of the discourse. This theoretical model is against the myth of progress in historiography that

dominated the discipline of the nineteenth century and some part of the mid-twentieth century; the model is against the big laws of historic facts that are looking for general rules that organize the history of the events. Foucault suggests that the mere enumeration of ideas and thoughts is not enough for historical analysis. According to him, traditional models on historiography tend to describe these ideas and thoughts as a continuous succession, explaining this continuity by the originality of certain authors, or the direct influence of certain economic, productive and technological processes. These tools aim to distinguish linear successions and totalities, usually based on big events such as war, industrialization, or the Great Depression, as unique variables that define the course of history. According to him, these kinds of analyses leave aside deeper investigations, and tend to hypothesize through simplistic explanations. In contrast, Foucault proposes a genealogical method, which focuses on the characteristics and conditions that explain the formation of the discourses that form the *epistemes*. The word episteme involves the notion of discourse, but at the same time involves the notion of epistemology, or how knowledge is apprehended.

Philosophy has commonly involved the project of questioning the accepted knowledge of the day. Locke, Hume, and especially Kant developed a distinctively modern idea of philosophy as the critique of knowledge. Kant's great epistemological innovation was that the same critique that revealed the limits of our knowing powers could also reveal necessary conditions for their exercise. Foucault, however, suggests the need to invert this Kantian move. According to him, scientific truths about human nature are often mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society; they are just the outcome of contingent historical forces, and are not scientifically grounded truths.

The historical *a priori* is a system (episteme), which has its own sub-systems (discourses, formulations, discursive objects) and possesses a structure in order to delimit a possible knowledge as well as its regulatory mechanisms and its way of dispersion. The systems and sub-systems, which form the episteme, are exposed to any interruption or break. In this sense, each episteme might be convulsed by another incipient episteme. The discourse can assume multiple meanings, in the same way there does not exist an absolute meaning or first meaning, neither exists an original discourse. A discourse pre-exists the subject, is autonomous from the subject, and its rules are anonymous.

Foucault notes that now, other types may replace the traditional questions in historiography, such as: What system of relations may be established between different series of events?

In Chapter 7 of *The Archeology*, “Remarks and Consequences,” Foucault argues that with the unity of discourse, like that of clinical medicine or natural history, we are dealing with a dispersion of elements. This dispersion itself, with its discontinuities, its incompatibilities and its substitutions, can be described if one is able to determine its specific rules, which are not visible. We cannot pretend, he says, to find a horizontal coherence between the elements.⁴ The question is: How can we affirm that we have properly individualized certain groups or wholes? Foucault suggests that it is possible, not only when one identifies a system of formation, coexistence and juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements, such as institutions, techniques, and relations between various discourses, but also when one can establish the relationship between those elements as systems.⁵ These systems of formation must not be taken as blocks of immobility, static forms that are imposed on

discourse from the outside; these systems reside in discourse itself, or rather on its frontier. By system of formation, Foucault means a complex group of relations that function as a rule. The regularity of practice of a group of statements defines a system of formation.⁶

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze published an article under the title “The Archeology of Knowledge”⁷ in 1969, commenting on Foucault’s book. In the book *Foucault* by Deleuze, published in French seventeen years later, the text “The Archeology of Knowledge” was extended and modified, and rebranded as “The New Archivist.” Deleuze called Foucault the *new archivist*, because henceforth he will deal only with statements, rather than propositions and phrases. Deleuze describes Foucault’s work in terms of statements, while in *The Archeology*, Foucault describes his methodology in terms of discourse.

Deleuze emphasizes that according to Foucault, statements are rare, and they are necessarily tied to a law. Phrases and propositions are multiplied; a phrase can always be opposed to another; or one proposition formed on the basis of another, but in the field of the statements, the virtual is not possible: everything is real. Statements only speak about what has been formulated at a given moment, including any blanks and gaps.⁸

Deleuze notes that it is not necessary to know the origin of a statement, it is not necessary be someone to produce a statement, and the statement is not related to a transcendental subject. As precisely as different individuals can reproduce the statement in different times, the statement is the result of a series of accumulations, and it becomes preserved, transmitted or repeated.⁹

In Chapter 4 of *The Archeology*, “The Formation of Enunciative Modalities,” Foucault distinguishes between the *enunciative subjects*, the *institutional sites* and the *perceptual distance*. The *enunciative subject* is one who enounces, delimits, constructs the hierarchies, the authority, the conditions for the interchange of information, its uses, distribution, etc. The enunciative subject is always validated by the institutional site. The *institutional site* is the place, where the discourse can be formed and legitimated. For example, the medical discourse, its diagnosis, arises from a certain institution, the hospital.¹⁰ The *perceptual distance* is the place where the gaze is directed, is the seeing subject and the observed subject.¹¹

Deleuze explains that any institution implies the existence of statements, such as a constitution, a charter, contracts, etc., which are necessary for the formation of both, the objects and the subject.¹² Between the non-discursive formations of institutions, and the discursive formations of statements, there is a great temptation to establish a sort of vertical parallelism, or a horizontal causality in which events and institutions would determine the nature of the supposed author of the statement.¹³ However, diagonal movement creates a third possibility; discursive relations become associated with non-discursive milieu, which form the limit, the specific horizon without which these objects could neither appear nor be assigned a place in the statement itself.¹⁴

Foucault’s readers, notes Deleuze, become aware of the fact that we are entering into a new domain, that of power and its relation to knowledge, which is to be explained by the sequel to *The Archeology*.¹⁵

Deleuze explains that in *the Archeology*, Foucault presents the most decisive step, yet taken, in the theory-practice of multiplicities. The subject has the character of a first person with whom discourse begins, while the statement is an anonymous function, which leaves a trace of subject only in a third person.¹⁶

The Archeology contrasts with the two principal techniques used until now by archivists, formalization and interpretation. Foucault instigates a very different project; his endpoint is the statement, the simple inscription of what is said. Archeology does not attempt to evade verbal performances in order to discover behind them or below their apparent surface a hidden element, a secret meaning, and yet the statement is not immediately visible. The statement is at the same time, non-visible, nor hidden.¹⁷

The essence of Foucault's method is that we are forced to begin with words, phrases and propositions, but we organize them into a limited corpus that varies depending on the problem raised. The originality of his method lies in the way in which he defines the corpus; neither on the basis of linguistic frequency or constancy, nor according to the personal qualities of the speaker or writer (great thinkers, famous statements, etc.) Foucault chooses the fundamental words, phrases and propositions on the basis of the simple function they carry out in general situations.¹⁸

Between both series, knowledge and power, the institution will constitute the element of integration, where the relations of power are articulated in forms, forms of visibility, as an institutional apparatus, and forms of statements, as its rules. In the institution, the exercise of power is able to constitute knowledge, and the exercise of knowledge is able to constitute an instrument of power.

Steps for the Genealogical Method

The steps that Foucault points out for the genealogical method of historical discourse involve the following tactics:

- **Definition of the Unities of Discourse:** they must show certain principles of internal organization,¹⁹ may not have a rigorous conceptual structure, but they must have a very precise function.²⁰ These unities of discourse arise as the result of a certain retrospective hypothesis that organized them by external systems.
- **The Discursive Formations:** are rules of simultaneity and succession that regulate the emergence of certain discourses. Their emergence must be over certain material conditions, and it is the result of a group of knowledge, statements and practices that shape it. These regulate the succession or the simultaneity. The discourse didn't arise from an objective practice; it arises in a certain time and place that make possible its existence, from certain rules that permit its emergence. It has been shaped by daily practice, law, distribution, etc.
- **The Formation of Objects:** is the process of delimitation of the objects that belong to a certain science of knowledge. It is the successive and simultaneous accumulation of statements or discourses. The objects do not exist, but are created as logical configurations that arise from determinate *epistemes*. A discourse appears thanks to certain relations that permit its emergence, and its character is thanks to the co-existence of certain administrative practices. According to Foucault, the conditions necessary for the appearance of an object of discourse may exist in relation to other objects, which means the establishment of relations of resemblance, proximity,

distance, difference, and transformation.²¹ These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification. They do not define the object, but define its difference and its exteriority from other well established and well defined objects.²²

- The Formation of Enunciative Modalities: Foucault distinguishes between the *enunciative subjects, and the institutional sites*. The enunciative subject is one who enounces, delimits, constructs the hierarchies, the authority, the conditions for the interchange of information, its uses, distribution, etc. The enunciative subject is always validated by the institutional site. The institutional site is the place, where the discourse can be formed and legitimated.²³
- The Formation of Concepts: According to Foucault, a concept is the recurrent element that shows specific dependencies and subordinations within a system of classification. The pre-conceptual is for Foucault, the discursive pre-existences that make possible the emergency of certain concepts and the definition of their regularities.
- The Formation of Strategies: According to Foucault, a strategy is a conceptual group of objects and types of enunciation with acceptable coherence, stability, and rigor that permits the formation of certain themes.²⁴ These strategies do not appear before a discourse, and they are not the response to a deliberate project. They are discursive relations tied with non-discursive practices, which permit elaboration of the concepts and formulate the statements. To determine the possible *points of diffraction* of discourse, one may know that these points are *points of incompatibility*,²⁵ that means

that two objects or two types of enunciation, or two concepts may appear in the same discursive formation, without being able to integrate a unique series of enunciation, and it may generate a contradiction or inconsequence.²⁶ The two incompatible elements are formed in the same way, with the same rules, they are situated at the same level, and they may form an alternative rather than incoherence. Foucault called *the economy of the discursive constellation* to the group of operations that are produced by the discourse formation, when the discourse under study may also be in relation to analogy, opposition, or complementary with certain other discourses.²⁷

The theoretical framework for this study considers the discourse analysis proposed by Foucault as a starting point to understand the notion of historical a priori (developed in Chapter 2), and also consider genre theory as a complementary theoretical framework to analyze films, as I explain in the next section.

GENRE THEORY

The word *Genre* is a French word, which comes from the Latin word *genus* and dates to classical philosophy, where it was used in the sphere of classification. Aristotle in his work *Poetics* defined three main categories or genres: epic poetry, tragedy and comedy; and in *Rhetoric*, Aristotle classified arguments according to external evidence or according to kind of persuasion. Aristotle's distinction between rhetoric and poetic presupposes differences in purpose among texts.

Traditional definitions of genre in literary studies have been focused on textual regularities, characterized by similarities in content and form. More recent approaches to genre theory, without abandoning earlier conceptions of genres as “types” or “kinds” of discourse, emphasize the link between these similarities with recurrent actions, which are performed by individuals in specific contexts. Carolyn Miller suggests that similarities between discourses are useful for establishing a classification, but observing the conventions of rhetorical practice, including the audience who create and interpret the discourse, is a way to comprehend the discourse they use.²⁸ Genres, from John Frow's approach, mean something very close to what Foucault understands as discourses. If discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak,”²⁹ genres like discourses, are practices, because they carry out an action; they are also systematic, because they are relatively coherent in the way they work; and they are formative of objects in the very act of speaking of them.³⁰

Discourses and genres make a statement about the world; they are performative structures that shape the world in the process of putting it into speech.³¹ Genres and

discourses create effects of reality and truth; they imply realities of a pre-given reference with the effects of authority and plausibility.³²

The Importance of the Medium in Genre Theory

As Davis Foulger points out, there is a necessary relationship between medium and genre; a genre of communication cannot emerge without the support of a supporting medium. Foulger suggests that the long-term success of a medium is contingent on the development of multiple uses and associated genres. To illustrate this idea, he gives the example of Tele-writing, a medium that supported a competitive industry from the 1890s to the early 1980s, and died when new and more general media usurped their uses. Media with a strong inventory of genre, Foulger argues; survive in the face of withering competition, much as radio and movies survived the emergence of television.³³

Evolutionary genre theory, Foulger explains, presumes that genres change in response to changes in their competitive environment. The Russian formalist Yuri Tynianov first described in 1925 this approach, and proposed that genre is defined by the functions that it serves, rather than the devices that recur across content instances.³⁴ Devices are the product of attempts to provoke certain kinds of reactions, and audiences desire to be provoked in that way.³⁵ Form does not simply serve a function; it is the result of the desire to use a medium to satisfy a particular need or desire.³⁶ Function becomes then the engine that drives specialization of genre into specialized niches. It becomes the canvas on which competition between genres is drawn. In Tynianov's approach, genre is viewed as changeable over time, subject to competitive pressures from other genre, and "defined in relation both to the genres that surround it, and to the previous manifestations of that genre."³⁷

Foulger observes that genres emerge directly from and as a natural consequence of a medium's use. He also describes a cycle by which use is converted to genre. According to

him, the cycle of genre starts with the use of a medium for a particular purpose, and if the effects are minimal the medium may be abandoned for the use. If the effects meet or exceed the hopes of the message creator, it will probably be used again. As it is used repeatedly, the most effective message elements are adopted as practices.

Film Genres as Cultural Categories

Genres are not defined solely by their texts, as some scholars suggest, but they are shaped by external elements, such industrial and audience practices. As Jason Mittell points out, genres exist only through the creation, circulation, and reception of texts within cultural contexts.³⁸ To explain how a category becomes culturally salient; it is more useful to conceive genres as discursive practices. To examine generic discourses, we should analyze the contextualized generic practices that circulate around and through texts, and how specific cultural concepts are linked to particular genres. More important, if genres are formed through intertextual relationships between texts, their discursive enunciations that link texts become the site and material for genre analysis.³⁹

For Foucault, discursive formations are historically specific systems of thought, conceptual categories that help to define cultural experiences within larger systems of power; even discursive formations are often marked by discontinuities and irregularities. They are regular in the sense that they fit into a specific cultural context, which define certain games of truth. As Mittell posits, we need to examine how genres operate as conceptual frameworks; the goal of studying media genres as cultural categories, is not to make broad assertions about the genre as a whole, but to understand how genres work within specific instances and how they fit into larger systems of power.⁴⁰

Using the genealogic approach of Foucault to study film genres, we may collect many discursive instances surrounding a generic process as we can. It means that rather than focus on a specific instance that frames the genre study; we must put attention on the widest range of discourses that are functioning at the same time that the genre emerges.

Examining genres as cultural categories that constitute our everyday experiences with media, we can arrive at a clearer understanding of how genres work to shape our media experiences, and how media work to shape our social realities.⁴¹

Film Genre Theory and its Relation to Discourse Analysis

In general terms, I realized that traditional film genre theories pose certain limitations; the majority of these approaches tend to see film genre as a closed system that is related only to closer thematic influences. For example, the textual approach that is focused solely on filmic texts tends to isolate genres from the broad social discourses that surround them. Scholars, who understand film genres as a response to the industry and the audience, do not consider that the industry and the audience could be part of the dominant a priori of the time. Ritual approaches tend to be unhistorical, understanding that people's concerns are always the same and they vary only in the ways that the myth is symbolized. Ideological approaches that see film genres as instruments of government power or industry power, do not acknowledge differences between the diverse processes of genre formations, and tend to over generalize certain assumptions. The historical approach tends to trace direct cause/effect consequences between historical events and films, and evolutionary approaches tend to see genres only in one specific medium, and do not consider the process of genre adaptation to other mediums. This study includes traditional approaches, but also sees genres as an open

system, rather than a closed system of classification, which should be analyzed by intertextual relations that connect genres with larger systems of cultural production of knowledge and power.

In this project, genres are understood as enunciative modalities that distribute discourses, but they are also understood as cultural categories, which frame certain “realities” with the effects of authority and plausibility. In order to know if a film genre exists it must meet a significant group of works that can be categorized under that genre.

To study film genres does not mean to be focused solely on textual analysis, but the study of intertextual relations that frame the cultural production of knowledge. As Tony Bennett suggests, genre definitions (and the boundaries between genres), must be constructed from the recovery of the intertextual and inter-institutional relations that regulate spheres of social, cultural, political and ideological relations, in which texts function in concrete instances of production, distribution and reception, understanding that these may be heterogeneous and even contradictory.⁴²

Although discourses and genres share many characteristics, the main difference between the discourse analysis proposed by Foucault and genre theory (as it is understood in this project), is that discourse analysis aims to understand how systems of relations between dissimilar elements allow certain epistemes. On the other hand film genres are enunciative modalities that distribute discourses, according to their audience, the most appropriate medium, the close cultural contexts and the dominant discourse or historical apriori. Crime films are about crimes and they are directed to an audience that expects to see crimes, and romantic comedies are about romance and they are directed to an audience that expects to see

romantic stories. Genres represent immediate cultural contexts that are in a constant process of modification, but they also distribute dominant discourses that function as a process of accumulation. Dominant discourses are less changeable because they tend to be invisible and act as taken-for-granted frameworks. In this sense, under the same episteme, genres emerge, evolve, or eventually disappear, and this evolutionary condition of genres works in a complete different form than the episteme. For a change of episteme, another different episteme have to be produced. From this approach genres are the mechanism whereby discourses are represented and modified, and discourses not only use certain mediums, they also use certain genres.

CITY FILM

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, does not use the word genre, but defines city film as “the films in which the city acts as a conditioning factor of the fiction, because the city becomes a protagonist, but unlike the human characters, the city is not a fictional one.”⁴³ Nowell-Smith mentions a number of city films made in the silent period that generally portray the city and urban life in more or less celebratory mode, such as *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*; *Rien que les Heures*; and *The Man with the Movie Camera*.⁴⁴ He distinguishes between two types of city film: the film which is mostly studio-shot and offers a generally dystopian vision of a created city, with examples such as *Metropolis*, *Blade Runner* or *Sunrise*; and the other type is related with films that are mostly location-shot and happen in a place which is identifiable.⁴⁵ This description of city film seems extremely broad and insufficient for the purpose of this study.

James Hay offers a starting point to analyze films. He does not mention the word genre but he argues that it is necessary to discuss film as a social practice; that begins by considering how social relations are spatially organized, and how film is practiced from and across particular sites and always in relation to other sites.⁴⁶ Hay argues that the social subject forms spatial frames of reference about his/her world, but only as a consequence of, and as a basis for navigating and engaging those sites. The film’s role in maintaining and modifying social relations has to do both with how it becomes part of an environment and how it enables or constrains navigation of that landscape.⁴⁷ Particular films serve as maps within the places where they are engaged, and the *cinematic* is defined by the relationship among sites and flows. In his studies about Italian cinema after the World War I, Hay is

interested in describing how certain places became designated as “popular” and how they became “common” and part of Italian cinema’s historical relation to a changing conception of the “national” and the “popular” in this country. He aims to understand the repetition of certain common places (or *topoi*) across film narratives and genres.⁴⁸ His arguments are based on the horizontal recombination of elements from other genres, and the common element is the space or the place that define certain social relations.

In terms of theoretical approach, Hay emphasizes the space as the frame that represents in specific ways certain kinds of social interactions between the communities, who inhabited certain places and their spatial features. These representations tend to unify properties and act as taken-for-granted frameworks about places and their social life.

From this broad definition of cinematic city, other sub-classifications have been done, such as the “Banlieue-film”⁴⁹ (suburb-film) defined by T. Jousse as a body of films that portray urban spaces that surround French towns, and illustrate how a population that is formed mainly by immigrants, are excluded from society.

Maria Pramaggiore analyzes the Web memorials realized for the commemoration of the 9/11 Event. Through documentaries and fiction films, the media/virtual memorial creates an unofficial archive of sounds and images that contributes to the collective memory. Her analysis explains that some of these projects present the heritage of the *city symphony* genre.⁵⁰ Pramaggiore describes and delimits this specific genre, which may be understood as a sub-genre of the city film. She describes the *city symphony* as a “merger of documentary and experimental cinema that treats the modern city as its subject.” She points out some characteristics of the city symphony, such as the use of Surrealist collage, and gives the

example of Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1928), which presented "a coherent vision of the Soviet city as a utopian merger of human and machine," in order to analyze how *11'9"01* offers fragmented images of Modernism's successes and failures. Pramaggiore based on Mark Shiel, points out that New York is often described as paradigmatic of a distinctive American modernity.⁵¹ She mentions the first city symphony film, Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler's *Manhatta* of 1921, which inspired numerous others, including works by Robert Flaherty, Jay Leyda, Irving Brown, Herman Weinberg, Shirley Clarke, and Marie Menken. Other characteristics of the city symphony genre are the reliance upon musical form and rhythmic editing. As implied by the term symphony, she argues, these films are generally not organized by a narrative thread, but through repetition and motifs that speak to emotions without the apparatus of an organizing narrative logic, hence a collage.

Scott MacDonald describes the city symphony genre as those films that provide a general sense of life in a specific metropolis, often by revealing characteristic dimensions of city life from the morning into the evening of a composite day.⁵² Symphony structure, McDonald argues, is analogous to the structure of the city life:

In an orchestra, dozens of musicians play instruments that have evolved over history to produce a multipartite, but unified and coherent performance, within which the individualities of the contributing musicians are subsumed; in the city, the individual contributions of millions of people (working with technologies that have developed over centuries) are subsumed within the metropolis's mega-partite movement through the day, a movement that reveals several predictable highs and lows.⁵³

Edward Dimendberg⁵⁴ identifies the city symphony as a “genre,” but he acknowledges the difficulty in categorizing the works most commonly associated with the term. He argues that_

Few episodes in cinema history appear more secure than the genre of the city symphony that emerged in the 1920s and whose best-known examples remain *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* and *Man with a Movie Camera*.⁵⁵

Dimendberg argues that city symphonies typically are set in identifiable metropolis, which portrays places of residence, employment, and leisure over the course of a day. These films cannot be clearly categorized as documentary, experimental, or narrative film, “their interest resides in the cinematographic preservation of ephemeral urban life no less than an aesthetic structure itself that evokes the rhythms, parallels, and contrasts of metropolitan civilization.”⁵⁶

Thomas Elsaesser does not mention city film genre, but provides a framework to see films in terms of urban characteristics. He describes *Media Archaeology* approach as one, which helps to think about the audiovisual media “laterally,” that is not only as a “chronological succession of movements and new waves,” but as the “co-extensive practices that form recurring kinds of *cultural genealogies*, linked by network structures as well as the clustering of clichés, around certain nodes.”⁵⁷ *Media Archaeology* may be understood as an alternative approach to mainstream classifications, according to film stars, national cinemas, genres, or recognized masterpieces of auteur or avant-garde cinema. Elsaesser sees a particular opportunity to analyze, debate, and launch new discourses, by adapting existing

ones from within the film field, or by initiating a dialogue with adjacent disciplines.⁵⁸ Media Archeology understands film as *event*, rather than the traditional idea of film as text. The event, according to Elsaesser, has its own temporal and spatial coherence, a process that is usually tied to a site. An event is linked to a time structure, not as a continuum like narrative, but as pulsed, intermittent, and shaped by intervals. Events as spaces tend to be centrifugal, multi-layered, and heterogeneous in their consistency and materiality.

Elsaesser sees that the associations between film and spaces are useful for rethinking non-fiction films in terms of an *event scenario*, in which the actual film is only one piece of the evidence and residue that is examined and analyzed. To think of film as an event is a network model, in order to determine the relation of one film to another, and to understand its place within wider histories. Event and network also help to overcome traditional binaries, such as the left-right, progressive-reactionary division that has marked the history of documentary film, notably for the interwar period, and the Cold War period.⁵⁹

The conclusion Elsaesser drew from his study was that, in examining a particular corpus of non-fiction films, it is perhaps advisable to suspend all pre-existing categorizations, such as they have evolved in film history around documentary, avant-garde, experimental, advertising film, fascistic propaganda film, or politically progressive filmmaking. He explains that it is better to assume, in the first instance, that non-fiction filmmaking (but many fiction films as well), especially during the 1920s and 1930s, functioned as part of a *Medienverbund*. By *Medienverbund* he means, a network of competing, but also mutually interdependent and complementary media or media practices, focused on a specific location, a professional association, or even a national or state initiative.

Elsaesser's approach should be read in terms of the "simultaneous function of genre." As Kamberelis argues "genre allows for the display of both: its extensiveness or the ability to articulate the similarity of a surprising number of texts; and the intensiveness, or the ability to unfold a particular text in considerable detail."⁶⁰

City Films in this Project

In this project, city films are those films, (1) that set the action in a city and the story describes how the social life of the characters is influenced by the city space; (2) films that describe a community, which is organized in certain spaces that influence their communitarian life; and (3) films that portray cities and domestic spaces that frame the lifestyle of their inhabitants.

This framework includes existing approaches to film genre, but aims to initiate a dialogue with adjacent disciplines, such as architecture and urban planning. City films are necessarily tied to a site, a place, which must be analyzed, not only from its cinematic representation, but within a network model, which relates spaces with urban developments, theoretical models that inspire them, formal materialization of these models, as well as, governmental regulations that frame the urban projects.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The project will be articulated through four research questions:

- (1) What were the most predominant urban models and architectural models of housing, developed during the first-half of the twentieth century in America and Britain?
- (2) What were the main discourses associated with these models?
- (3) What were the most predominant urban models and architectural models of housing that were commented on by American and British films, during the 1930s and 1960s?
- (4) How were urban discourses commented on by American and British films, during the 1930s and 1960s, as portrayed through specific film genres?

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The Choice of Study Period

The choice of the study period, between the 1930s and 1960s, meets the following considerations: the study considered 40 years with the aim to analyze if the city's discourse changed or evolved during this time. The starting point in 1930 is because this decade marked the end of silent films, which would be material for another study. Additionally, in this period, cinema was consolidated as a mass medium, which functioned as the only audiovisual media before the invention of television. This period included the starting point of documentary practices that were used by governments to promote urban models. This fact opens-up a valuable opportunity to research a considerable body of films realized in this time period. In addition, the Post-Depression, Inter-War, and Post-War eras implied significant changes in the process of urbanization and city growth, establishing the urban and architectonic themes, as part of the cultural discourses of the time.

Steps of Research Project

This research project is divided in two parts. The first part is focused on urban discourses and urban models; it is developed in Chapter 2 in order to answer RQ (1) and RQ (2). The second part is the research on films; it is presented in Chapter 3 in order to reveal RQ (3) and RQ (4).

Description of Research Project / Part One

Research Question (1) intends to identify the main urban models and architectural housing models that were developed in both countries, during the first-half of the twentieth century.

Research Question (2) intends to illuminate how these models were animated through certain discourses, which were formed through a process of systematic repetition and accumulation. Research Question (2) also aims to understand how certain arguments were used to support these urban and architectonic models, and served to justify them as the best solution for American and British cities.

The genealogical method to investigate the discourse of the city includes:

- Research about the conditions of the city, its problems and concerns in the time when urban issues started to be discussed. This research will be done through analysis of written texts about the topic, with special emphasis on the commentators of the time.
- Research about the emergence of urban planning, as a regulatory institution supported by the government. This research will analyze the statements that were produced in the time period.
- Research about urban models that defined types of neighborhoods, and/or city growth for industrial cities. This study will be developed through the review of urban projects and architectonic models of housing that were developed in both countries during the first-half of the twentieth century, as well as, research on the arguments that were used to support these models.

- Research about urban regulatory laws, which operate as strategies and tactics of power/government that seek to use space for particular ends; and
- Research about how the process of systematization and distribution of the discourses occurred.

Description of Research Project / Part Two

The research on films starts by the selection of the body of films examined in this project. My film selection includes both documentaries and fiction films. The inclusion of both types of films aims to explore how urban themes were presented not only in educational films, such the case of many documentaries financed by the government, but also in commercial films, which were made for the consumption of large audiences.

The film selection is part of the research. Understanding that the city film genre does not exist as a scholarly and historical genre, the search process for films that speak about the city is part of the project. The tactics for this data collection include literature review, viewing films, and the selection of final films. In order to document the film research, I created a card with stills of the film for each chosen film, in order to complement the study with visual analysis.

The selection of fiction films excludes the following genres: (1) Western films, because they are not set in urban contexts; and (2) American and British films that use international locations, such as Paris, Rome, Germany, etc., because the focus is the American and British cities.

The criterion to select films under a lens that looks at the formation and reproduction of spatial discourses is based on the definition of city film discussed previously.

The selection of films is not entirely a random selection because many films that speak about the city have been commented on by the scholarly literature of the topic, which provides previous information about them. Although the existent research provides some examples of films that this project includes, an extensive search of films had to be done, considering a film viewing of more than 300 films and a final selection of 87 films.

The selection of documentaries is a focused selection; I have chosen documentaries that specifically speak about urban space and housing developments in both countries.

To respond to Research Question (3) the analysis will be predominantly a formal analysis, emphasizing the pro-filmic elements, or what kind of city and houses were placed in front of the camera. This research will be complemented with photographs of the films.

To respond to Research Question (4) the analysis will be focused on rhetorical practices and film techniques that films used to describe spaces. The aim was to identify relationships between kinds of space's descriptions with pro-filmic characteristics, recurrent stories, characters, and specific kinds of social life, and explore how these rhetorical practices and film techniques were used to describe urban and architectonic models in specific film genres. The aim was to illuminate if there exist concordances between certain film genres and the way they describe city spaces.

CHAPTER 2

URBAN DISCOURSES

Introduction

The city is the main constructed social organization and mode of living that represents modernity. One of the ways that traditional studies portrayed the notion of urban society is through its measurement by numeric data. Kingsley Davis for example, defined an index of urbanization as the proportion of people living in places of 100,000 inhabitants or more. From this definition, there were in Europe 33 urbanized towns in the sixteenth century, 46 in the seventeenth century, and 61 in the eighteenth century. The average rate of growth during these three centuries was less than 0.6 percent per year, and by 1810, nearly 10 percent of the people of England and Wales were living in cities of 100,000 or larger. This proportion doubled in 1850 and doubled again in 1910.¹

In this project urban societies are seen as systems that necessarily are tied with the formation of the “city-state,” understood as a territorial and institutional structure, which organize and control the population. Urban societies, like industrial cities of the nineteenth century, needed models for spatial organization, especially from the rise of urban disturbances and insurrections of the poor, which since the eighteenth century started to be frequent, and involved more and more people. Spatial organizations implied the creation of both urban models and a set of coherent regulatory systems, which ensured a gradual extension of mechanisms of discipline; the formation of what Foucault calls “the disciplinary society.”

From this approach, urban planning, as a technical discipline that appeared in Europe during the second-half of the nineteenth century, may be understood as a regulatory institution that organized and planned the growth of industrial cities and their spatial features; and also as an extension of mechanisms of discipline that empowered certain institutions and professionals, by providing new frameworks of legislation and regulatory systems, exercised by the governmental apparatus, and justified as a form of public right.

This study suggests that the different models that organized city spaces and articulated their growth, may be seen as the result of constructed discourses that were formed through a growing public opinion on urban issues since the nineteenth century, structured around the need for the state to take over the health and conditions of the population, and distributed through writings, urban theories, images, films, etc., and materialized through specific urban laws and large architectonic projects. More important, these models and the arguments that supported them, rather than as natural or logical responses, arose thanks to the relations of power and knowledge that framed the historical a priori of the time, which validated certain discourses as scientific truths, as I explain through specific examples in this Chapter.

Human Settlements as Social and Moral Models

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, techniques of power centered on the individual body started to emerge.² They included all devices used to ensure the spatial distribution of individual bodies and their surveillance in order to improve their productive force. Foucault describes this phenomenon as the “disciplinary technology of labor.”³ Spatial devices served to impose a necessary order, which emerged from the need for social identification and social authority, especially when the Western project was self-affirmed.⁴ As François Choay notes, the loosening of religious constraints, the shedding of tacit ancient interdiction, and the advent of new types of freedoms,⁵ made it necessary to redefine how individuals might be organized in the space.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, we see the emergence of industrial laborers’ settlements, which were thought to congregate groups of workers and organize workspaces and dwellings, but also to function as social and moral models of obedience and discipline, which supposedly helped communities to increase productivity and to improve their moral behavior. These settlements were rationally planned as artificial towns, and their common pattern was the individualization of each family by providing individual units. These spatial designs were widely disseminated in Europe and America, and operated as the earliest materialization of the idea that the environment determines character, and by providing a supposed appropriate environment, a society could function appropriately.

The *Phalanstery* of Fourier, the *Parallelogram* of Owen and the *Icaria* of Cabet were some examples. The *Phalanstery* was conceived for 1600 to 1800 people. To Fourier, the *Phalanstery* was the manor house and the essential, irreplaceable instrument that guaranteed

the conversion of its inhabitants. The Phalanx or central building had no outside streets or open roadways exposed to the exterior. The Phalanx could be traversed by a wide gallery that runs along the second floor. At each extremity of this spacious corridor there were elevated passages, which connected all parts of the Phalanx and the adjoining buildings.⁶

The *Parallelogram* was a residential unit for 1200 inhabitants. The design included social services at the center of a square, and the factories were located outside the quadrilateral (see Figure 1). This design was conceived as a “machine to improve the physical efficiency and the mental welfare.”⁷



Figure 1. View of a French Phalanstery

Unknown artist of the 19th Century, Format: ink on paper. Source: Amherst College Library, Digital Collection.

America was the laboratory to test these theories, such as the community established in Butler County, Pennsylvania called “Harmonie.” “Father” George Rapp, who led a group of 800 German Lutheran immigrants from Württemberg, headed Harmonie Society. They soon outgrew Harmonie, and started to look for other sites with better climate for grape

production. They bought 20,000 acres on the banks of the Wabash River in Indiana, built “New Harmonie” and moved west. The Harmonists were a religious group that believed in the literal interpretation of The Bible. They pursued “Christian perfection”, practiced celibacy and lived highly ordered, productive lives. They also made their own tools, cookware and everything they needed to be truly self-sufficient. After the Harmonists left, Father Rapp sought out a buyer for New Harmonie, and Robert Owen, who had longed to establish a new social order, purchased it in 1825.⁸ Owen’s “New Society” was short-lived, dissolving after two years, but his oldest son, Robert Dale Owen, stayed in New Harmonie after his father returned to Britain.

Other examples in America were *Phalanx* founded in New Mexico in 1851 by Victor Considerant (a Fourier follower), *Icaria* of Texas (1848), *Icaria Nauvoo* in Illinois (1849), and the last attempt *Icaria* in Saint Louis, Missouri, founded by Cabet in 1856.⁹ The Icarian communities hoped to transform and redeem society with the radical standardization of neighborhoods, dwellings and even furniture.¹⁰

In 1813 and 1814, Owen presented his proposals for reform in the book *A New View of Society, or Essays on the Principle of the Formation of the Human Character*. The first two essays were about the necessity to rationally form the character of the immense population of poor; according to Owen, their style of life only encouraged crime and offense. The essays were about obedience, order and work. The third essay was about the progress in New Lanark, a small village founded by Owen in January of 1800, which was designed for the workers of Owen’s cotton factory.¹¹ The essay described the importance of improving the life conditions of the inhabitants and the need to encourage children’s education. Owen

pointed out the need to teach the poor in order to form useful people for society and production for the state. His ideals were centered on the belief that people should be good, wise and happy, and to achieve his ideal, he believed that education was not only school-based education, but also a parents' care, which should treat one's children with sweetness and kindness. In his fourth essay, Owen argued that the most important duty of the State was the establishment of a national system of education for the poor, which should be homogeneous across the country. He believed that education was a right for all children, and he decided in his own factories, not to employ children under 10 years old, assigning less work hours to older boys and girls in order that they attend school classes.¹² Owen's *New View of Society* was republished five times and was translated to French and German. The cooperative communities that Owen described in his book could be created by owners of industries, or by associations of workers. In the mid-1830, three schools based on Owen's principles were created in London, and other schools were founded in industrial centers such as Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.¹³ Owen's principles were imitated in the region of Yorkshire, where the Victorian philanthropist Sir Titus Salt, built in 1853 a small village named *Saltaire*, (see Figure 2) which was designed to provide self-contained living spaces for the workers at his alpaca wool mill.¹⁴

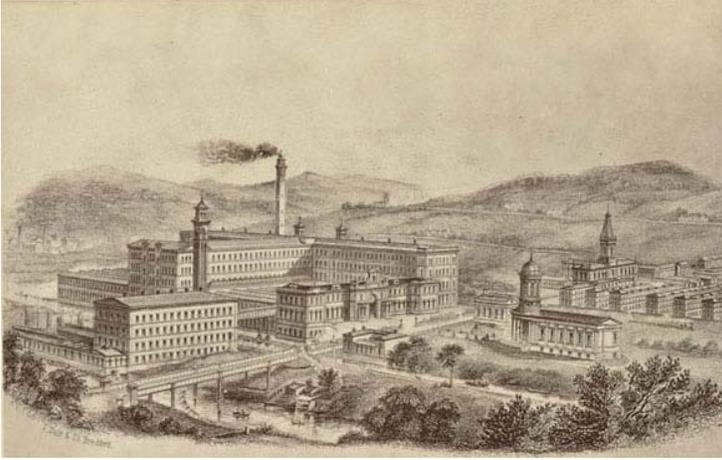


Figure 2. Saltaire

Source: <http://www.harmoniumnet.nl/museum-saltaire-ENG.html>

Another example in Yorkshire was *Akroydon* (see Figure 3), a Victorian model village at the north of Halifax, founded by mill-owner and philanthropist Edward Akroyd in 1860. Raymond Unwin suggested that “Akroyd used the neo-Gothic style on its houses to convince the workers they were on their way to becoming middle-class people.”¹⁵

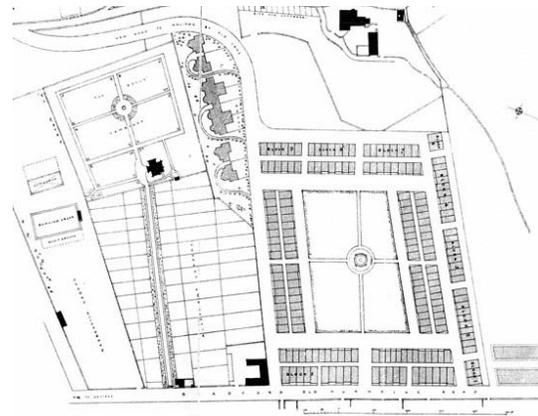
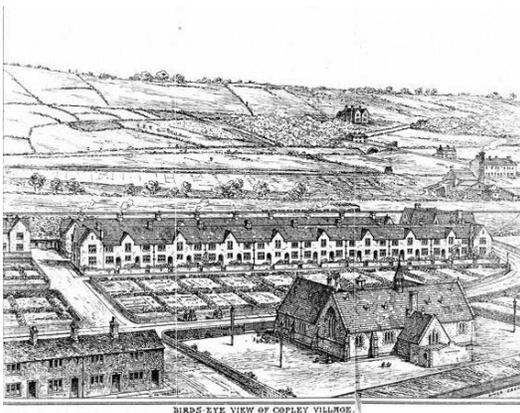


Figure 3. Houses and Plan of Akroydon

Source: Online Visual Archive of Calderdale History <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk>

In Europe, examples of these same principles were used in the French towns such as *Le Creusot*, which functioned between 1782 to 1914, and *Le Dolfus*, founded in 1854, as well as the antique city of *Essen* in German (1859-1906), the *Grand Hornu* of 1825 in Belgium, and *Rossi* in Schio, Italy in 1873, only to cite some examples.¹⁶

Other private initiatives had developed in America, such as the case of the railroad car industrialist George Pullman, who concentrated his employees in an industrial town (see Figure 4), built in 1880-1884 in Illinois, close to Chicago. The design aimed “to improve relations between management and labor by creating a clean and beautiful community for his workers...[and] expected them to respond with hard work, loyalty and improved moral character.”¹⁷ By 1893, the population had reached 12,000. There was no local government and a town agent managed the community. The company decided to install stores, a library, and a local playhouse. Worker discontent was expressed in an often-quoted: “We are born in a Pullman house, fed from the Pullman shops, taught in the Pullman school, catechized in the Pullman Church, and when we die we shall go to the Pullman Hell.”¹⁸



Figure 4. Scheme of Part of Pullman's Industrial Town, Illinois, 1882
Source: <http://www.pullman-museum.org>

One House to Each Family: The Strategy of Biopolitics

The European interest in the conditions of the population, with special emphasis on working classes, started to be an issue of public opinion. Napoleon III entrusted the French engineer le Play with the organization of the Exhibition of 1855 for working class housing, and appointed him as Counselor of State, Commissioner General of the Exhibition of 1867, Senator of the Empire and Grand Officer of the Légion d'Honneur. Le play proposed that workers of factories, which came from the countryside, had to have a house located in suburban areas.¹⁹ This model emphasized the single-family house, each one with an individual vegetable garden. Similar theses were elaborated by Wilhelm Emanuel von Ketteler and Victor Aime Hubert in Germany, Karl von Vogelsang in Austria, and Patrick Geddes in England.²⁰ In 1890, the *Housing of the Working Class Act* was passed in Britain and laws related to working class housing started to appear in Belgium (1899), Holland (1901), Austria, (1902), and Italy (1903).²¹

Before the legal appearance of “the urban planner,” isolated governmental initiatives were conducted to improve the living conditions of the population. Edward Soja argues that the long waves of investment in the built environment of Paris were characterized by deep troughs in the years of revolutionary violence, such 1830, 1848 and 1871.²² Between 1850 and 1853, Napoleon III ordered the construction of the *cite ouvriere*, with 200 houses for 600 inhabitants located at *le Rue Rochechouart* in Paris. In 1852, 1859, 1864 and 1869, he assigned funds for the improvement of worker houses in different manufacturing cities of France.²³

The poor, who historically were in charge of philanthropic and religious institutions, were since the eighteenth century, not only “the poor,” but the mass of workers that immigrated from agriculture to factories, and formed part of the productive system. They started to become extremely numerous, and were rebranded as “the population.” The discourses distributed by commentators of the time, firmly established that workers’ settlements and their hygienic conditions strongly influenced their behavior and productivity. As Foucault points out, in the second-half of the eighteenth century, a new technology of power emerged, but this time it was not disciplinary,²⁴ understood as the planned industrial towns. The new technology of power did not exclude disciplinary technology, but transformed it, using complete different instruments.²⁵ Unlike discipline, this was addressed to bodies, “the new non-disciplinary power was applied not to man-as-body”, but “to man-as-living being.” It was addressed to a multiplicity of men, which was affected by “overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on.”²⁶ More important, in the second-half of the eighteenth century, this new technology of power that Foucault calls “biopolitics”, was related with birth rate, mortality rate, longevity, etc; together they constituted the whole series that were related with economic and political problems.²⁷ The first target object that biopolitics defined was “the population,” which had to be observed and controlled.

The Christian institutions, which proposed their organization by the Church, postulated in principle, “that certain individuals can, by their religious quality, serve others not as princes, magistrates, benefactors, etc, but as pastors.” This system of power that Foucault calls “the pastoral power”²⁸ was salvation-oriented and it began to operate, since the

eighteenth century, out of the sphere of ecclesiastical institutions.²⁹ The modern state, as the entity that was developed above individuals, incorporated sophisticated structures in which “individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns.”³⁰

In this context, the word “salvation” took a very different meaning from the religious notion. In the modern state, salvation had to do with health, well-being (in terms of sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents, etc.³¹ Foucault gives some examples of public institutions, such as the police, which exerted the pastoral power in the eighteenth century. Their functions were created not only for maintaining the law and the order, but also for ensuring urban supplies, hygiene, health, and standards considered necessary for handicrafts and commerce.³²

Medicine, for example, was focused on public hygiene at the end of the eighteenth century, with institutions created to coordinate medical care, centralize information and normalize knowledge.³³ The domains of biopolitics, understood as a new technology of power that dealt with the population, included the control over relations between individuals, their hygienic conditions, and their environment, the milieu in which they lived. This environment was not as the “natural” environment, but the environment that was created by the people and produced effects on the people.³⁴ This environment was essentially, the urban space, understood as the “unnaturalness.”

Biopolitics understood the population as political problem, and as well as scientific problem, as biological problem and as power’s problem.³⁵ The mechanisms that biopolitics introduced included statistical estimates, forecasts and overall measures, which were used “to

intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined, to intervene at the level of their generality.”³⁶ The mortality rate had to be lowered, life expectancy had to be increased, and birth rate had to be stimulated.³⁷

Regulatory mechanisms that were applied to the population encouraged certain patterns related to housing and promoted the idea of one house for one family.

Many writings of the time demonstrate the concerns that linked morality and sanitary considerations, such as the statistical enquiry of the housing situation in Gothenburg, Sweden, published in 1891 and explained by Doctor Hjalmar Wallqvist:

Virchow³⁸ has broken new grounds in the medical sciences with his ‘cellular pathology’ that attributes diseases and their treatment to new appearances in the cell. More or less consciously, the sociologist now does the same, by explaining unhealthy appearances in family life as the source of deep and common social suffering. Because the entire societal body is endangered, if what in itself can be said to correspond to the cell, that is the family, more commonly reveals unhealthy symptoms. Therefore, it is plain to see that a thorough knowledge of the foundation of the family: the house and home, is of the greatest importance for a social pathology and therapeutics. There were no doubts about the result of these efforts: the isolation of these families should be the objective.³⁹

Few years before, a number of manuals for the construction of working class housing started to appear, such as *The Dwellings of the Laboring Classes* writing by Henry Roberts and published in England in 1850, which was translated to French by the order of Napoleon

III. After the conference *Habitation a Bon Marché* celebrated at Paris in 1889, other treatises were written: *Habitations Ouvriers* by Muller, *Homes of the Working Class* by Holes, and *Wohnungsnot der kpeinenleute* by Huber.⁴⁰

In Britain, Edwin Chadwick promoted research on the hygienic conditions of Whitechapel's and London's population, achieving the extension of the research in the next year to the whole country. The result was published in 1842 with the title *Report of the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population*. Two years later the group *Health of Towns Association* was formed. They aimed to improve the hygienic condition of British cities and lobbied parliament to improve sanitation. Their efforts paid off in 1848, when the *Public Health Act* introduced the first sanitary legislation for this country. The passing of the first laws about subsidized construction was three years later, at 1851: the *Common Lodging Houses Act* and the *Laboring Lodging Housing Act* were passed in a country of liberal thinking and a tradition of non-state intervention.⁴¹ In the same country, the *Laboring Classes' Dwellings Houses Act* of 1866 was passed.

Before the eighteenth century, technical knowledges were plural, multiple, and dispersed existence of different knowledges.⁴² Geographical regions, size of the workshops, etc., defined their differences, and the differences among their technological expertise were defined by local categories, education and wealth of their possessors.⁴³ The eighteenth century developed a distinct technical knowledge, which was articulated by the idea of disciplines, in order find a way to distribute and multiply a homogeneous set of knowledge. Foucault notes that the State intervened in this process using the following techniques: First, eliminating what might be termed useless; second, by normalizing the knowledge; third, by

creating a hierarchical classification of knowledge; and fourth, by creating a pyramidal centralization that allowed these sets of knowledge to be controlled.⁴⁴ Since the second-half of the eighteenth century, Foucault argues, a huge effort to homogenize, normalize, and centralize medical knowledge, and the way that this medical knowledge could be distributed, allowed the creation of homogeneous laws that were imposed upon the practice of health care, as well as, by the definition of certain rules imposed over the population.⁴⁵ In this form, the eighteenth century was the century when knowledge was disciplined, especially through the criteria of selection that allowed it to eradicate false knowledge or non-knowledge.⁴⁶ The homogeneous knowledge started to be called “science” at the same time it allowed its condition of supposed “truth.”⁴⁷ In this form, the institution congregated the expertise and the authority to eliminate, normalize, classify, centralize and define the hierarchies. In other words, the institution started to articulate the relation between power and knowledge.

The *Cross Act* was a legislation, which empowered British local authorities to buy or demolish “unfit” property, but there was little provision for re-housing people and a complex bureaucracy that turned the process extremely slow. The new model dwellings were hated for their overbuilding, their lack of greenery and petty regulations.⁴⁸ In 1884, Queen Victoria herself, led directly to the appointment of the Royal Commission of the Housing of the Working Classes.⁴⁹ This Commission was chaired by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke and included the Prince of Wales, Lord Salisbury and Cardinal Manning. The Commission’s report of 1885 concluded:

The conditions of the houses of the poor...are still a public scandal...there is much legislation designed to meet these evils, yet the existing laws are not put into force,

some of them having remained a dead letter from the date when only first found place in the statute book.⁵⁰

The Commission calculated that mortality levels, especially for children, were extremely high. The abundant evidence confirmed that in London, eight persons formed a typical family and they were confined to one room. Those who survived lost an average of twenty days work a year, because they “get depressed and weary.”⁵¹ The Royal Commission’s main recommendations were focused on how to ensure the local authorities used the existing powers that were established by previous laws, rather than adding new powers. For example, the so-called Torrens Act (The Artisan’s and Laborers’ Dwelling Act of 1968), allowed local authorities to clear large areas of unfit housing and to rehouse their inhabitants. The Housing of the Working Class Act was passed in 1885, and it also extended Lord Shaftesbury’s ancient 1851 Lodging Houses Act, redefining it and including separate dwellings and cottages for the working classes.⁵²

As Foucault notes, the power relation that the modern State exercises is not the renunciation of freedom, at the contrary, it is the manifestation of a consensus.⁵³ It operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself; it incites, it induces, it seduces, makes more probable or less.⁵⁴ Power relations are also modes of action, more or less calculated, they act upon the possibilities of action of other people, and more important, this kind of power relation is exercised only over free subjects.⁵⁵ In contrast to the notion of sovereignty, Foucault argues, government has the purpose to improve the condition of its population, to increase its welfare, longevity, health and so on.⁵⁶

The population is now the subject of needs and aspirations, but it also the object in hands of the government.

The transition that took place since the eighteenth century was from a regime dominated by structures of sovereignty to a ruled regime dominated by techniques of government.⁵⁷ As a consequence of this turn, rules, laws, and the formation of specific governmental apparatuses that formed in Foucault words, the “administrative State”, became to shape a society of regulations and disciplines.⁵⁸

Urban planning was one of the institutions of the administrative state. Through a series of regulations, norms, and specific laws, the planning institution became the place from where the experts spoke and defined the main rules for spatial configurations. From this site of authority, norms were planned for a disciplinary society, as well as, thought for the welfare of the population. Urban planning was firmly established as a need and as a right for citizens, through the promotion of hygienic conditions for the people and individual housing for each family. All these statements became in Foucault words, *games of truth*, and undeniable sets of knowledge, supported by rationalistic and scientific proofs, studied by experts and backed by governmental institutions.

The Urban Planner: A New Governmental Employee

According to Margo Huxley, the three main approaches that are commonly used to explain the emergence of urban planning as a discipline, are the utopian approach, which sees the origins of planning in visionary attempts to imagine better societies; the reformist approach that understands urban planning as nineteenth century urban reforms and the consolidation of State planning legislation and spatial regulation; and the “diffusionist” approach, which examines urban planning as the diffusion of ideals and ideas that circulated between countries.⁵⁹ Other approaches understand the origin of urban planning as serving the needs of capital, such as the Marxist inspired analysis, or Feminist approaches, which are focused on patriarchal domination.

The genealogical approach, on the other hand, rejects the notion of an essential origin of a social phenomenon or historical process; it seeks to show the recurrence of taken-for-granted notions, not in order to trace gradual curve of their evolution, or a total explanation that assumes a theory of “man” or “the social.” Genealogical approach requires attention to specific discourses and practices, which constitute subjects as having particular attributes, at the confluences they come to recognize themselves.⁶⁰

Genealogies of “planning” understand that different perspectives are always immersed in power relations and in institutions, where the exercise of power is able to constitute knowledge, and where, the exercise of knowledge is able to constitute an instrument of power.

The Prussian Law of 1875, empowered public institutions to determine the plans of the city.⁶¹ The German engineer Reinhard Baumeister was a planner, a technician and a

public employee. He was the author of numerous regulatory plans and a manual of urbanism, published in 1886. The manual described with scientific rigor, precise demographic information, the estimation of housing demand, hygienic conditions and traffic volume. The manual also defined dimensions and regulations for future buildings, criteria to prevent fires, the optimal separation between different zones within the city, and criteria to define land expropriation.⁶² In 1890, the German architect Joseph Stubben, published a broader urban manual, including as well as, typologies of buildings and defining, not only quantitative issues, but other aesthetic features on building design, and the design of parks and squares.⁶³ Stubben's treatise appeared one year after the publication of Camilo Sitte's book, and seemed to include some of the aesthetics principles proposed by the Viennese architect. Stubben's work was complemented with a legislative appendix about the construction of the city and its neighborhoods. In 1909, Rud Eberstadt deepened the housing policies, focusing not only on the housing demand, but also on its features, establishing an inventory of building types and a rational process of German residential construction.

The figure of the urban planner would gain more influence in governmental initiatives during the first mid-twentieth century, as will discussed later through the specific cases of Britain during the inter-war period, and after the War World II; and of America during the implementation of New Deal Plans during Franklin Roosevelt's government.

Congestion and Overcrowding: The Illness of the Industrial City

The link between nineteenth century-biological theory and the discourse of power, may be explained through the notion of “evolutionism”, understood as ideas such as “the hierarchy of species that grow from a common evolutionary tree, the struggle among species, the selection that eliminates the less fit”, etc.⁶⁴ During the nineteenth century these notions became, not only “a way of transcribing a political discourse into biological terms, or dressing up a political discourse in scientific clothing,” but a real way of thinking about “the relations between colonization, the necessity for wars, criminality, the phenomena of madness and mental illness, the history of societies with their different classes, and so on.”⁶⁵ From this approach, war is now not only a matter of destroying political adversaries, but of destroying the enemy race, of destroying the sort of biological threat that those people represent to our race.⁶⁶

Concerns about the consequences of the industrial city were openly expressed in cities such as New York in the 1890s. The traditional Jeffersonian concern saw the city as “pestilential to the moral, the health and the liberties of men,” a cancer or tumor on the body social and the body politics, which was fueled by industrialization and immigration.⁶⁷ New York became the greatest city of immigrants in the world, with “half as many Italians as Naples, as many Germans as Hamburg, twice as many Irish as Dublin, and two and half times as many Jews as Warsaw.”⁶⁸ One of the first progressives to advocate planning in order to achieve social reform was Frederick Howe, who in his 1905 book *The City: the Hope of Democracy*, urged the adoption of German City Planning practices.⁶⁹ In the same sense, Benjamin C. Marsh organized in 1908 an exhibition at the American Museum of Natural

History, to display the overcrowding and congested city. In 1909, Marsh published a short book entitled *An Introduction to City Planning*, which advocated the adoption of German planning techniques to American cities.⁷⁰ In 1909, Marsh organized the first national Conference on City Planning and Congestion, to elaborate and publicize the themes of his book. The conference papers were subsequently published as a Senate document in 1910.⁷¹ The U.S. Congress document of 1910 illustrated some of the discussions of the time. For example, Robert Anderson Pope criticized the City Beautiful Movement as impractical and elitist:

...we have rushed to plan showy civic centers of gigantic cost, in design the expression of, at best, only small group of individuals...brought about by civic vanity, and bears the character of external adornment, when pressing hard by we see the almost unbelievable congestion with its hideous brood of evil, filth, disease, degeneracy, pauperism, and crime. What external adornment can make truly beautiful such a city?⁷²

In place of City Beautiful, Pope argued, “city planning is of primary importance as a social and economic factor.” Pope advocated decentralizing and more equitable distribution of land values, widening of streets and establishment of radial and belt thoroughfares, and the adoption of land use zoning as practiced in Germany to regulate “building heights, depth of blocks, number of houses per acre, and land speculation with all its attendant evils.”⁷³ Pope illustrated his belief that city planning was essential to national and ethnic survival, when he expressed:

The average recruit in the German army is much taller, stronger, and heavier than the British soldier, spends less time in the hospital, and has a lower death rate... the modern tendency toward congestion in cities and the increase of unhealthful living conditions have been so ably combated in Germany that no real impairment of her manhood can be detected...While it is admitted that many causes have contributed to this result, city planning is known to be a very important factor.⁷⁴

The Chicago School of Sociology, proposed a model that retained some elements of the progressive vision of the city, which saw that the solution of the slums problems would involve major changes in the urban society as a whole. The process of social and spatial mobility that sustained the suburban movement was viewed by the Chicago School as an ecological or sub-cultural process of invasion and succession, whereby individuals moved sequentially from the inner city to the outer suburbs. Then the concentration of ethnic groups was also described as an ecological process, which created “natural areas,” whereas the enforced segregation of blocks was attributed to institutions of discrimination.⁷⁵ To Robert Park of the Chicago School, residential differentiation improved means of communication and flexible voluntary associations, and it would provide new sources of cohesion in an increasingly segmented society.⁷⁶ However the slum clearance program involved, as Lawrence Vale points out, that public housing’s authorities built their projects in ways that increasingly maximized their architectural distance from the dominant cultural ideal of the single-family home.⁷⁷

Sociologists: The New Experts

In other European countries, diverse publications discussed the impact of the industrial metropolis. In 1887, the German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies wrote *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, which reflects the great division between folk and urban society; between the intimate relationships of family and community, and the impersonal alliances born of modern polity, economic exchange, and state power. Toennies defines community as the social system, which involves an everyday life, with face-to-face relations with a relatively stable set of persons in relatively fixed institutions. On the other hand, he defines a society merely as a collection of communities, with a market town, where many relations are no longer face-to-face, and institutions are impersonal rather than personal.⁷⁸

The German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel published in 1903 the essay, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*,⁷⁹ which described how the modern metropolitan individual is distinguished by a “blasé attitude,” which is a product of the “intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli.”

The 1893 Emile Durkheim’s book, *Division of Labor*, discussed not the structure of social organization, but the structure of economic production. *Division of Labor* was published one year after the formation of the first Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Most of the major works from the Chicago department were about cities, especially the social disorganization that characterized them. Park, Burgess, and Mackenzie published *The City* in 1925, and took as given the division of labor and the non-family-based mode of production, which accompanied the social structure of the city life.⁸⁰

Robert Park and his student Louis Wirth were leading figures of the Chicago School of urban sociology. Park had attended Simmel's popular Berlin lectures in 1899 and 1900, and Wirth later described Simmel's *Metropolis and the Mental Life* as "the most important single article on the city from a sociological standpoint."⁸¹

Rosalyn Deutsche suggests that the Chicago School transformed Simmel's writings in two significant ways: they combined Simmel's ideas with other intellectual influences, such as the theories of Charles Darwin, and adapted the Darwinist vision to urban life, abandoning Simmel's emphasis on the determining effects of a money economy. In this form, Chicago sociologists developed a comprehensive urban theory based on human ecology,⁸² and justified the process of decentralization and planned communities in suburban areas as a natural form of human evolution.

Survey research, which measured social change, was the emphasis of sociology through the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s. Symptomatically, research in social stratification, which in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s had focused on single towns or cities, in the 1960s, reflected the shift to a national economy.⁸³

Urban sociology became a source of scientific and rigorous data, which informed the problems of city life. The discourses associated with concentrations of people, transit congestion, and deficient conditions of living, seemed to explain the causes of all social problems. The emphasis on the strong contrast between metropolitan life and small communities developed during the first decades of these sociological studies, which worked as part of the assemblage of discourses, located the urban dwelling as synonymous with slum housing, racial-ethnic diversity, social pathology, and the potential for civil disorder.

The Metropolis and the Threat of Social Insurrection

During the mid-1880s, the real terror among the British middle classes was that working class would rise in insurrection.⁸⁴ The Grand Britain Committee of Disturbances reported in 1886 that in February, for weeks, unemployed workers and socialist intellectuals had been holding meetings in Trafalgar Square. On Monday February 8, a huge meeting was met by a force of over 600 police officers. Fearing an attack on Buckingham Palace, the mob numbering between 3,000 to 5,000 people, moved into the streets of St. James and Mayfair breaking windows and looting shops.⁸⁵

In 1886, Charles Booth⁸⁶ organized a social survey, which according to Topalov, was the first modern survey of the time. Booth was a Liverpool ship-owner, who believed that the situation was serious, but “not visibly fraught with imminent social danger or leading straight to revolution.”⁸⁷ He went to London in order to embark a survey to understand the nature of unemployment, and in particular, to understand and quantify “who did not really want to work” and those who were “not unemployed but badly employed.”⁸⁸ Booth presented his first results in 1887 and a second report a year later. According to him, the poor of East London were numbered 314,000 and represented 35 percent of the entire population. Extending that percentage pro-rata meant that one million Londoners lived in poverty.⁸⁹

Booth’s study included a classification of people in different classes: The first Class A of 50,000 in all London included “many young men and girls who led a savage life, with vicissitudes of extreme hardship and occasional excess.” Some of them were “semi-criminals, street sellers, street performers and others.”⁹⁰ The second Class B represented 300,000 in whole of London. Booth described them as “shiftless, hand-to-mouth, pleasure

loving and always poor.” This class also included a large number of widows, unmarried women, young people and children, who “work when they like and play when they like.”⁹¹ The third Class C numbering 250,000, were formed by “a pitiable class, consisting largely struggling, suffering, hopeless people, victims of competition, who their basis problem was the irregular nature of their earnings.”⁹² The fourth Class D, numbering 400,000 in London, “lived hard lives very patiently.”⁹³ For Booth, the 37 percent of the East End population were in poverty, and it was equally significant that 63 percent were not poor.⁹⁴

The recently formed Fabian Society, which joined a group of socialist intellectuals and published in 1887 *Facts for Socialists*, sold 70,000 copies within eight years.⁹⁵ As the group pointed out in 1889, “in London” the researchers found, that “one person in every five will die in the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum.”⁹⁶ While the average age of death among the nobility and professional class of England and Wales was 55, among the artisan class was 29.⁹⁷

These publications strongly influenced the construction of preconceptions about the city space. The link between slums with illness and death, started to work as dominant discourses that did not make the distinction between city slums and the city in broad terms.

Concentration Means Unhealthy Population: The Emergence of the Green Ideal and the Politics of Dispersion

The green ideal will be used in this project as the counterpoint to the model of the overcrowded, overbuilt and unhealthy industrial city at the end of the nineteenth century. This definition as “the opposition to,” aims to illuminate how the green ideal emerged and exists as an object of discourse, in a relation of difference and opposition to the well-defined, well-measured and well-described overcrowded and unhealthy industrial city. As Foucault points out in *The Archeology*, the object is not necessarily defined, but its difference is clearly defined and described.⁹⁸ In the same form, the green ideal was presented from its beginnings as the solution to all social problems that were caused by congestion, immigration, and urban vice. The main ideas associated with the green ideal were linked (more as an illusion than a reality), to the notion of nature, safety, small community relationships, and a more humane style of life.

Predominant urban models developed in Britain and America during the first-half of the twentieth century were strongly linked with the green ideal. The green ideal was supported by European Enlightenment’s intellectuals such as Voltaire and Adam Smith; romantic poets, a large list of nineteenth century artists, and diverse writers and reformers, who pushed the view of the city as full of vice, risk, and crime, and a disappointment of hopes raised by the Enlightenment project.⁹⁹ The Victorian industrial elite adopted a rural nostalgia particularly reflected in literature, with Thomas Hardy’s country books as leading examples.¹⁰⁰ The celebration of the rural was also evident in the United States: the flight from the city, the role of the highway as a refuge, the claim of man in nature and the

emphasis on rural spaces, have constituted a constant theme from Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright.¹⁰¹ The metropolis embodied all the miseries of modern life, whereas the countryside became an idyllic hope. From the bucolic *Idylls* of Theocritus written in the first half of the third century BC, or Virgil's *Eclogues*, written between 42 and 39 BC, pastoral has been depicted as an idealized lush, tranquil and cultivated landscape.¹⁰² As L. Marx pointed out, *Eclogue I* portrayed the pastoral ideal as a place situated in a "middle ground between the civilization of the big city and the raw wilderness of untamed nature; to arrive at this heaven, it is necessary to leave Rome."¹⁰³

The "green" assumptions were developed as a reaction to crowding into slums of the working classes. The priority was space, light, fresh air and parks for the urban masses.¹⁰⁴ In terms of the organization of spatial features, these arguments were materialized through city zoning, building regulations and urban models, which provided a clear structure of the city-space founded on separation and dispersion. Decentralization was the main model promoted and depicted as the most desirable way of living. This discourse was rooted on sociological, hygienist and rationalistic discourses, which were defined primarily as the opposition to all the elements that supposedly threatened the individual's welfare.

In the next section, I discuss some of the discourses distributed at the time that formed part of a net, which constituted the "Formation of Strategies," understood as conceptual groups of objects and types of enunciation with acceptable coherence, stability, and rigor.¹⁰⁵ These strategies do not appear before a discourse, and they are not the response to a deliberate project. They are discursive relations tied with non-discursive practices, which permit to elaborate the concepts and formulate the statements.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

The Arts and Crafts Movement flourished in Britain in the 1880s, promoted by Victorian writer John Ruskin and William Morris, a craftsman and designer, renowned for his inspiration from nature. John Ruskin was an Oxford College professor, who began to address his concerns about industrialization in his writing and lectures. He wrote *Modern Painters* (1843-1846), *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853). In *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin introduced the idea of historic preservation as a duty “to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, the past ages.” Ruskin argued that material culture was imbued with spiritual force and, as such, was a reflection of the character of its maker. Handwork was more “honest” because it embodied qualities of “happiness,” “spirit,” and “life” itself. “Head and hand,” “dignity of labor,” and “arts and crafts,” were some of the slogans created by him. Ruskin criticized the machine as the root of many social ills, stating that a healthy society must be depended on skilled and creative workers.

Ruskin firmly believed that industrial cities were the cause of society’s problems. As he pointed out in a letter of 1880:

...the great cities of the earth...have become...loathsome centers of fornication and covetousness; the smoke of their sin going up into the face of heaven like the furnace of Sodom; and the pollution of it rolling and raging the bones and the souls of the peasant people round them, as if they were each a volcano whose ashes broke out in blains upon man and upon beast.¹⁰⁶

Like Ruskin, William Morris became a household name. In 1861, he founded the company “Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture, and Metals,” and his essay “Useful Work vs. Useless Toil” was an indictment of those who profited from the labor of others.

The members of the Arts and Crafts Movement included artists, architects, designers, craftsmen and writers. They believed, not only that handcrafted objects were superior to those made by machine, but that the rural craftsman had a superior lifestyle to those who slaved in the urban mills and factories. The simple country life was one example of the Arts and Crafts ideal, portrayed by communities such as *Chipping Campden*, an abandoned rural village; and in America, Ruskinian communities were *Rose Valley* and *Roycroft* in the village of East Aurora, New York. This community lasted from 1895 until 1938, when it failed during the Great Depression.¹⁰⁷ All of these communities were based on the production of diverse and extensive line of arts and crafts, and the new buildings were designed in an eclectic, but essentially neo-Gothic fashion.¹⁰⁸

Morris, like Ruskin, never wrote on town planning per se, but one of the clearest expressions of Morris’ views on planning was his lecture *Art and Socialism* (1884), in which he set out his approach about the need for pleasant, worthwhile work as a central aim for society. He defined the necessities as: “Honorable and fitting work; decent surroundings, and ample leisure.” He amplified the second need to include good lodging, consisting of ample space, general order and beauty:

...our houses must be built, clean and healthy there must be abundant garden space in our towns and our towns must not eat the fields and natural features of the country,

may I demand even that there be left waste places and wilds in it, or romance and poetry, that is Art, will die out amongst us. Order and beauty means that not only our houses must be stoutly and properly built, but also that they be ornamented duly: that the fields not only be left for cultivation, but also that they not be spoilt by it any more than a garden is spoilt: no one, for instance, to be allowed to cut down for mere profit, trees whose loss would spoil a landscape: neither on any pretext should people be allowed to darken the daylight with smoke, to befoul rivers, to degrade any spot of the earth with squalid litter and brutal wasteful disorder.¹⁰⁹

In the lecture *The Lesser Arts* (1877), Morris proclaimed solutions for the conditions of living; and in the lecture, *Makeshift* (1894), he described his vision of a salubrious modern city:

In the special cases which are representative of a civilized manufacturing district or the cities which have grown, not great but big, because they are the seat of the government of the country, the mere size if nothing else seems bound to make them unmanageable: contrast such monstrosities of haphazard growth as your Manchester-Salford-Oldham, etc. or our great sprawling brick and mortar country of London, with what a city might be: the center with its big public buildings, theaters, squares and gardens: the zone round the center with its lesser guildhalls grouping together the houses of the citizens: the outer zone again, still with its district of public buildings, but with no definite gardens to it because the whole of this outer zone would be a garden thickly besprinkled with houses and other buildings. And at last the suburb

proper; mostly fields and fruit gardens with scanty houses dotted about till you come to open country with its occasional farmstead.¹¹⁰

Although the Arts and Crafts Movement arose as a response to industrialized objects, criticizing their lack of quality, and artistic features; this Movement understood nature as a source of inspiration and as the “natural” place for living. This discourse celebrated country life, and condemned urban concentration, as synonymous with “unnatural” unhealthy, corrupted, and unproductive behavior. This pattern of opposition between “natural” and “unnaturalness” worked in many other discourses of the time. The machine seemed to be the only option to promote progress, but the resistance to the consequences of this progress seemed to define a common response: the idea of spatial dispersion.

The City Beautiful Movement

The American Park Movement began in New York City in the 1840s. Central Park opened in 1862, and was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead in the English picturesque tradition. He also designed the campuses for Columbia University and the University of California at Berkeley, which served as green utopias for Lewis Mumford and other twentieth century planners.

The plan for the City of Chicago of the 1870s, which included vast green areas, became world famous under this label by hosting a world exhibition in 1893. The World's Columbian Exposition was a fair created in Chicago to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the new world. The Exposition covered more than 600 acres, featuring nearly 200 new buildings of predominately neoclassical architecture, canals and lagoons. More than 27 million people attended the Exposition during its six-month run. It became a symbol of emerging American progress, much in the same way that the Great Exhibition of 1851¹¹¹ became a symbol of the Victorian era in United Kingdom.

Charles Mulford Robinson was a young journalist from Rochester, New York, and editor on the *Post-Express* of Chicago at the time of the Fair.¹¹² Robinson wrote articles and editorials about the planning of cities, or more especially about their improvement with constant emphasis on their appearance. "Civic Aesthetics" became for him a driving force. The shorter pieces of his series for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1899 were entitled: "Improvement in City Life," including "Philanthropic Progress," "Educational Progress" and "Aesthetic Progress." *Harper's Magazine* offered him an opportunity to go abroad, and his articles for Harper's appeared in 1901 and 1902, at the same time he brought out his first book, *The*

Improvement of Towns and Cities, or the Practical Basis for Civic Aesthetics, that appeared in 1901.¹¹³ The book had a most enthusiastic reception and was reprinted a few months later.

He wrote:

Civic art is not an outgrowth only of fashion and large gifts. They can do much to make beautiful a village, but in a populous community the roots should reach down to the common people, to the people who individually have little money but who by the force of their numbers stamp the public taste and opinion, to those to whom the city's care is ultimately committed. There can be no exclusiveness in civic art.¹¹⁴

The success of the first book encouraged Robinson for a second and larger volume, *Modern Civic Art, or the City Made Beautiful*, published in 1903, with a second edition in 1904 and a third in 1909.¹¹⁵

The Country Place Era

The relevance that green environments meant to American society, may be illustrated by the movement called *The Country Place Era*, which was the result of socio-economic changes created by the “newly wealthy” of American industrial development. These business owners looked outside of the city for recreation and relaxed living, and bought acreage in rural areas to plan their country estates with sophisticated designs of houses and parks. Some of these magnificent country estates were: Henry Ford's (founder of Ford Motor Company) “Fair Lane,” in Dearborn, Michigan, built around 1915 and designed by the landscape architect Jens Jenson; F.A. Seiberling (founder of Goodyear Rubber Company), who moved in 1912 to “Stan Hywet” in Akron, Ohio, designed by the landscape architect Warren

Manning; and J.K. Lilly, Jr. (grandson of the founder of Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Company), who founded in 1932 his “Oldfields” in Indianapolis.

Andrew Jackson Downing’s publications, such as the *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* of 1841, and the 1850 essay “Our Country Village” published in *The Horticulturist* magazine, served to describe the landscape character of a planned rural village located in “the suburbs of a great city,” and popularized elements of English design in the United States.¹¹⁶



Figure 5. View of Glendale

Source <http://www.glendaleohio.org>

Outside Cincinnati, for example, the Glendale Village was the first romantically planned suburb with curved streets, greens areas and rich plantings (see Figure 5). The founders and owners of Glendale Village aimed to build their summer residences in a place between Hamilton and Cincinnati, on the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton railroad, which was just being built. They purchased the land and created an association in 1851, which was incorporated as a village under the laws of Ohio in 1855. Six hundred acres of land, were

subdivided into lots and laid out into streets and parks planned by R. C. Phillips, a civil engineer of Cincinnati.

Another example is Llewellyn Park, located 12 miles outside New York City in northern New Jersey. Llewellyn Solomon Haskell, a New York businessman, founded in 1857 a suburban community of country estates. It was designed by Alexander Jackson in 1854, and it was advertised as “Country Homes for City People.”¹¹⁷

In 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted designed a plan for Shady Hill, the Cambridge Massachusetts estate of Charles Eliot Norton, bordering the Harvard University campus. Olmsted described his plan as an attractive neighborhood with “the more agreeable rural characteristics of a New England Village.”¹¹⁸

In 1869, Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Riverside in Illinois, a 1,600-acre planned community located on a bend of the Des Plaines River and linked by railroad to Chicago. The eastern businessman Emery E. Childs brought together a group of associates to form the Riverside Improvement Company. The Company offered “water and sewer mains, individual gas hookups, paved roads, street lamps, sidewalks, parks and railroad depot.”¹¹⁹

In 1923, *Landscape Architecture* magazine featured a chart of 29 selected Olmsted projects, from 1883 to 1923. The chart enumerated the elusive boundaries between private desires and public responsibility codified into the covenants of restricted communities. “Exclusion was explicit in racially limiting covenants or implied by the economic prohibition of a minimum house cost.”¹²⁰

URBAN MODELS

Urban models are specific solutions of spatial configuration and spatial distribution that were thought to solve the problems of city growth; however urban models may be also seen as the materialization of urban discourses that were distributed on the time. These discourses formed part of complex ideological and political struggles, which many times detracted the original conceptions and accommodated them according to political interests.

The architectonic models of housing and neighborhoods, assumed from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, could be described in a very simplistic way by two main urban models: on the one hand, the garden suburb, based on the Garden City model, characterized by a romantic vision of the pastoral and pre-industrial past. This model proposes groups of single-family houses or townhouses, distributed through a low-density pattern, the predominance of green spaces or parks; and many times, the use of conservative aesthetics in architecture, which intends to recover the image of the little village. On the other hand, the model that we may call Le Corbusier's "Radiant City," means housing unities formed by the rise of high-density apartments, collective public spaces in the form of parks, or large empty spaces that surround buildings, collective amenities shared by the inhabitants, and modernist aesthetics.

While the green suburb sees decentralization as the way to grow, the high-density apartments propose densification and centralization. These models represent opposite visions about the city: while the garden suburb intends to promote the idea of small, self-contained communities as a way to preserve the individuality of their inhabitants, and as way to resist the metropolis; the high-density building model has been strongly associated with

economical solutions focused on the poor, as form of social housing, where the collective prevails over the individual.

Earlier examples of these high-density buildings are the well-known 1920s' *Siedlung* (see Figure 6) in Berlin, a massive housing settlement for factory workers with a park like court-yard ringed by apartment dwellings; or the series of *Siedlungen* planned by Ernst May, when he was appointed as city architect for Frankfurt in 1925.¹²¹



Figure 6. Berlin Siedlung

The Britz Metropolitan Settlement for 5,000 people was erected in 1925 and designed by Bruno Taut Source: Senate Department of Urban Development, <http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de>

The original ideas of both models would be later transformed and subordinated to expressions of “functional” design that was ordered into great zones of single land uses, with fast motorways connecting up the different districts.¹²²

The German architect Joseph Stubben argued that single houses could never become a realistic alternative for the large mass of workers and for the poor. He alluded that Europe was divided into two separated areas: single-family houses, dominating the western and northern parts, and the high-rise buildings, dominating the southern and central parts.¹²³ In Sweden, however, the English view of architecture was an ideal firmly established, in part by the book published by August Brunius in 1911, *Hus och Hem* (House and Home). The cottage ideal implied a different townscape from the one, which dominated most inner cities (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Suburb in Stockholm 1933-1939

Private Building Contractors Carl Larssons väg, Zornvägen, Sweden. Source: *Modernism as a Vehicle for Social Change in the Nordic Welfare-States* Publisher: Arkitekturtidsskrift B.

Edel, Sclar, and Luria note that working-class people were avid consumers of mass media, which promoted homeownership and suburban preferences in America during the early twentieth century.¹²⁴ Greg Hise traces the roots of the planned satellite suburbs for workers developed in Los Angeles prior to World War II, to Ebenezer Howard’s garden city

ideas, disseminated by design professionals and social reformers with decidedly middle-class assumptions about how working families ought to live.

Garden city ideals were distilled down to a set of principles and practices, modern community planning, and given a standard form: the neighborhood unit.... Together these formal types became a replicable module, the basic building block for rational planning and the creation of a new kind of city. Over time, people came to see modern community planning and the neighborhood unit as an essential infrastructure for community.¹²⁵

Margaret Crawford details the comprehensive planning of several company towns built between the 1890s and 1950 in the United States. Crawford notes that worker classes' tastes and demands had some impact on company town design, influencing the decision to offer single-family houses and to vary the look of their exteriors. Crawford suggests that post-Pullman company towns were overseen by design professionals, who developed model homes and communities in order to produce a positive environmental reform, through the inclusion of aesthetics and technology used by designs of upper-class homes.¹²⁶

These examples demonstrate that both the low-density green suburb and the high-density modernistic building were developed during the same period. The next section discusses the main discourses and arguments used to promote both urban and architectonic models for housing developments. These discourses helped to create the knowledge about the best form of living, and also helped to shape the process of subjectivation, understood as a

process from which individuals function over a specific historical a priori, which guides the perception about the world that surround them.

As Mary Corbin Sies notes, “how individuals perceive cities and suburbs is mediated by prevalent cultural ideas and images; cities and suburbs are partly landscapes of the mind or cognitive landscapes, and only partly specific social and physical environments.”¹²⁷

THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

English Garden Cities

The term “Garden City” had become well known at the beginning of the twentieth century. C.B. Purdom declared in 1921, that its significance was deeply rooted in the desire to remedy “the evils of overcrowding and congestion of population in the towns, which is the greatest obstacle to the improvement of civic life.”¹²⁸ Alexander T. Stewart, the head of the largest retail dry goods store in New York, had made the first use of the name Garden City. In 1869, Stewart purchased 8,000 acres of the town lands of Hempstead, Long Island; in order to build a model town for his own and other New York workers. He died seven years later and the scheme was held up. He had, however, put down a railway from New York and constructed wide, tree-lined roads. At the time of Stewart’s death, there had been 102 houses built for rent, with a population of 275. The place became a thriving suburb of New York, which attracted several new large factories.¹²⁹

The current use of the term Garden City was due entirely to a book published in London in 1898 by Ebenezer Howard. His book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* was republished in 1902 with the title *The Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. The Garden City was described by Howard as a new type of town:

There are in reality, not only, as is so constantly assumed, two alternatives (town life and country life) in which all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country, may be secured in perfect combination.¹³⁰

Many aspects of the Garden City's discourse were borrowed from other discourses of the time. The idea of decentralization of cities, the democratization of wealth and power, the need to revitalize British agriculture, and other approaches, such as the Arts and Crafts Movement that claimed the return to hand-made traditions, were discourses, which as a whole acted to combat the "evils" of industrialization. The Garden City model provided a life style closer to nature; and it was accepted and supported by the most diverse positions.

When Howard published his book in 1898, he turned next to the land reformers group, vitally interested in the redistribution of population. This group wished to reverse the exodus of labor from the countryside to the cities, in order to revitalize British agriculture, which had been suffering a severe depression since the 1870s.¹³² The rural immigration reduced the percentage of the work force employed in agriculture from 21.7 percent to 8.7 percent between 1851 and 1901, and saw the rural immigration as threatening the stability of the country. Land reformers noted that agricultural depression did not affect all of English farming with equal severity. The largest estates, held by the great landowners, were the hardest hit; their principal product was swarmed by foreign imports and dropped 50 percent in price between 1878 and 1896.¹³³ Land reformers promoted the idea that the poor of the cities could be profitably returned to their own land in order to reverse the dangerous imbalance in English society.¹³⁴

Diverse proposals were developed, ranging from farming cooperative unions of family farms (such the examples developed in Denmark), to providing labor camps "where the unemployed could profitably be employed in space labor."¹³⁵ Alfred Russel Wallace founded the most influential group in 1881: "The Land Nationalization Society" (LNS). This

radical group was the enemy of the large landowners, but was not completely supported by the middle-class reformers, who were against the idea of expropriation, and wished a solution without threatening property. During the annual meeting of the LNS, celebrated in 1899, Wallace declared that Garden Cities “would offer a practical and very striking illustration of the truth and importance of our fundamental principles.”¹³⁶ With the Society’s help, Howard formed in 1899 his own organization at the offices of the LNS: “The Garden City Association.”¹³⁷

In 1901, the first detailed statement of the Garden City objectives was announced at a conference held at Bournville. Sir Ralph Neville, a prominent London lawyer and chairman of the Council of the Association for many years, explained the principle of the model:

The idea is to bring the town to the country by the establishment of industrial centers in rural districts...the proposal was to purchase a site at agricultural prices...to lay that site out as a city, a city which manufacture shall proceed and the laborer will find a home...the advantages of country life being secured by the permanent allocation of a large proportion of the site belonging to the Garden City to agriculture, and the restriction of buildings to a fixed proportion of the site purchased.¹³⁸

In 1909, Neville wrote “The Divorce of Man from Nature,” published in the *Journal Garden Cities and Town Planning* Number 34. This article argued the convenience of the model:

The multitude of impressions received by the brain and rapidity of their impressions, tend to induce shallowness of thought and instability of purpose. An increase of emotionalism and a loss of fastness stead are marked characteristics of town dwellers.

He believed that if the large city continued to be the home of the working class, “nothing could prevent the ultimate decadence of the race.”¹³⁹

With the help of Neville, the Garden City movement moved up from the English radicalism represented by the LNS, to English liberalism, on the side of government officials. The liberal victory in the general election of 1906 seemed to open the possibility for new legislation that Howard could not have in the 1890s. With the encouragement of the Garden City Association, the new government supported a new Town Planning Bill, which became law in 1909. In 1917, C.B Purdom wrote a pamphlet, “The Garden City after the War,” in which he argued that the new housing should become the basis for national planning according to Garden City principles.¹⁴⁰

The first Garden City was established in 1903, at Letchworth, in Hertfordshire (see Figure 9). It was a private initiative based on a large area of land purchased by a company in order to establish a town and industries for a population of 30,000.¹⁴¹ The original prospects of the Garden City Company stated that:

The inhabitants will have the satisfaction of knowing that the increment of value of the land created by them will be devoted to their benefit.... The schemes are that the town is to be limited to a population of about 30,000 inhabitants, that the greater

portion of the estate is to be retained for agricultural purposes, and that the dividends to share holders are to be limited.¹⁴²



Figure 9. Aerial View of Letchworth

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica <http://www.britannica.com>

Letchworth was conceived as a town in which agriculture and mechanical industry were associated. According to the census of 1921, the town had 10,313 inhabitants with factories and workshops. “Its population was largely industrial and it provides employment for a large population in the surrounding villages.”¹⁴³

In 1919, a second Garden City was established near Welwyn, also in Hertfordshire. In the preliminary announcement, the aim was:

...to build an entirely new and self-dependent industrial town, on a site twenty-one miles from London, as an illustration of the right way to provide for the expansion of

the industries and population of a great city... it is urgently necessary that a convincing demonstration of the garden city principle of town development shall be given in a time to influence the national housing program, which is in danger of settling definitely into the wrong lines.¹⁴⁴

When Purdom wrote the introductory chapter of the book *Town Theory and Practice* in 1921, the public discussion in Britain was centered on the national plans, which intended to build a large proportion of new houses added to big towns. The Garden City Movement was against that principle, and their arguments were that growth would be excessive for towns that were already overcrowded. They claimed that garden suburbs were not a solution, because in cases such as London, workers had to be so far from the centre and their daily journeys would be a grievous burden. The Garden City model, by the contrary, would pay “equal attention to housing and to the provision of manufacturing facilities.” Healthy and well-equipped factories and workshops would be “grouped in scientific relation to transport facilities” and would be easily accessible from the new houses of the workers. Another argument stated by Purdom was that the town area would be defined and the rest of the estate would be permanently reserved to an agricultural and rural belt. In addition, a population of 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants would be defined in order to anticipate all “its social, recreative and civic needs.”¹⁴⁵ Purdom advocated the principle of self-contained town, independent of other existent towns, in order to stop the ‘wilderness of houses and congestion, deformity and helplessness” of cities such as London.¹⁴⁶

The Garden City and Town Planning Association adopted in 1919 a formal definition:

A Garden City is a town planned for industry and healthy living, of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life; surrounded by a permanent belt of rural land; the whole of the land being in public ownerships or held in trust for the community.¹⁴⁷

The Garden City's statements operated as persuasive discourses, directed to broader sectors of public opinion. Between the late nineteenth century and the end of the World War II, urban governments were facing the dual problems of rapid metropolitan expansion, urban poverty and the emergence of strong organizations of the poor. The worker middle-class wanted to read about urban reforms, and the government wanted to solve social pressures.

Over the years, the Garden City Association encouraged an international movement and parallel associations in many countries with the participation of municipal authorities. For example in Germany, *Gartenstadt* (Garden City) and *Arbeiterkolonie* (workers settlement) soon became synonymous concepts, as the city of Hellerau, which was completely dependent on a single employer.¹⁴⁸ The Garden City concept was also used for the *Kolonisation* of the less densely populated eastern parts of the country,¹⁴⁹ and the garden suburb was used in the expansion of Frankfurt under the influence of Ernst May after the World War I.

However, Garden Cities, as new planned towns, independent from other cities, were exceptions: Letchworth and Welwyn in Britain, Hellerau close to Dresden in southeastern Germany, and some of the British new towns. The Garden City became mainly a model used for suburban extensions of expanding cities.

A town expansion variant of the Garden City model was planned for Sofia, Vienna and Brussels. In France, sixteen garden suburbs were built around Paris during the inter-war period. In his research about the growth of the city of Stockholm, Mats Delan notes that the inner city ends very abruptly. The city began to expand over virgin land, spreading sparse low-density districts in all directions.¹⁵⁰ In Nordic countries, Viinikka garden suburb was founded in the 1910s in the south part of the industrial town Tampere, in Finland. The settlement was mainly for a working class population of the munitions industry supporting Russian war efforts. One year earlier, Kulosari was founded as a settlement near Helsinki. Both provided cottage housing in spacious and green environments.¹⁵¹ In Norway, there was a strong tradition of company-built model cities inspired by the Garden City theories, situated in isolated areas close to mining or hydropower plants, such as the examples of Rjukan, built in 1907, and Eidehavn, founded five years later. Swedish examples are Kiruna, built for the LKLAB iron mine in northern Lapland, and parts of Alvdalen in northwest Dalecarlia.¹⁵² In Norway, during 1911, a general supervisory board for housing questions was established, and from 1912 the municipality started to build housing settlements. Between 1915 and 1930, 82 percent of new housing was built by the municipality, of which 20 percent were built in garden suburbs.¹⁵³

Green and Decentralized: The Ideal American Community

Planned communities such as Riverside in Illinois, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1869; Radburn in New Jersey, designed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright in 1929; and Broadacre, the 1935 Frank Lloyd Wright's model schema for a national plan of decentralization, may serve as some examples to illustrate communities, which their designs were inspired in the green ideal.

In the early 1920s, American architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, inspired by Howard's ideas and the success of Letchworth and Welwyn, created the city of Radburn in New Jersey. Radburn aspired to be an American Garden City, but also it was promoted with slogans such as "a town planned for the motor age" and "a town for children."¹⁵⁴ The design included the separation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and the use of superblocks, each one of 23 acres of commonly held parkland. Radburn's design included the use of cul-de-sac, a hierarchical road system, and common open spaces with curved streets.

Frank Lloyd Wright also believed that concentration and centralization was the evil of modern cities. In 1932, he wrote "The Disappearing City," his first attempt to promote Broadacre City, a low-density model based on the three principles that, according to him, had transformed the verities of temporal and spatial relations: the individual mobilization through the automobile, the advances in electrification and communication, and the standardized machine.¹⁵⁵ Wright claimed to liberate men and women, not in order to join cooperation, but to live as free individuals.¹⁵⁶

He continued the development of his idea and published the Broadacre's illustrated version in *Architectural Record* of 1935, and another illustrated version in "The Living

City”, published just before his death in 1959.¹⁵⁷ The plan was a decentralized version of the city, where suburb and country would have an organic unity.

Wright’s idea intended to cover a national plan. Broadacre was a model city built around a module of one acre per household, where “the home was the most important unit of the city, the center and the only centralization allowable.”¹⁵⁸ Broadacre model assumed that every inhabitant would own an automobile; the houses were classified as having from one to five cars, and the roads united and separated areas and functions (see Figure 10).

The relation that Frank Lloyd Wright established between decentralization, technology and freedom is clear when he wrote:

America’s past and future would unite to create the free city of democracy and the technology of Edison and Ford would resurrect Jefferson.¹⁵⁹ Democracy is the ideal of reintegrated decentralization...many units developing strength as they learn by function and grow together in spacious mutual technology.¹⁶⁰

Wright admitted that Broadacre was inspired by the ideas and experiments of Ralph Borsodi, a former economic consultant who realized his program of decentralization or “distributism,” which meant small owner units and mechanized homes production, such as small tractors, small scale labor saving machines, etc., first in Dayton, Ohio, and since 1935, in Bayard Lane, near Suffern, New York.¹⁶¹ Borsodi’s book, *This Ugly Civilization*, published in 1929, was an attack upon the entire factory and industrial system; and in *Flight from the City* of 1933, Borsodi described his experience with the self-sufficient small community that performed all functions, from canning food to making cloth.¹⁶²



Figure 10. Broadacre City by F.L. Wright

Drawing by Frank Lloyd Wright, source: <http://www.mediaarchitecture.at>

Decentralization and Zoning Policies in America: The Legal Figure for the Development of Suburbia

Around 1900, the general belief was that the population curve of cities would continue to rise in the same sharp ascent as in the immediate past.¹⁶³ Therefore, the population curve, as it concerned the center of the city began to change, first in Europe, later in America. London's center began a decline of its population in 1901. In New York, it did not set until 1910, but then quite strongly, Manhattan decreased from 2,331,542 inhabitants in 1910, to 1,662,195 in 1939.¹⁶⁴

Traditional historiography tends to portray the suburban process intimately tied with the period after War World II, therefore the process of decentralization started decades before. In North America, including Canada and the United States, decentralization of employment was well under way by 1900.¹⁶⁵

The requirement of zoning was understood as “land use that may be controlled directly by subdivision ordinances, regulating the extent to which a parcel of land may be improved for resale in individual lots and indirectly, by such considerations as highway construction programs, environmental constraints, and the jurisdiction's capital improvements programs; it must be done in accordance with a comprehensive plan.”¹⁶⁶ This statement first appeared in *The Standard State Zoning Enabling Act* (SSZEA), published by the U.S. Commerce Department in 1923. It became the model upon which state zoning legislation was based:

The comprehensive planning requirement was designed to ensure that zoning decisions be made according to previously determined standards rather than on an ad

hoc basis in which public needs might be subordinated to individual desires. By forcing local legislators to establish goals and to articulate a framework within which individual zoning decisions must be made, the comprehensive plan provides a means for balancing and integrating public needs and individual property rights while providing coherence and discipline in the pursuit of goals of public welfare which the whole municipal regulatory process is supposed to serve.¹⁶⁷

Before the Federal Government promulgated the SSZEA, there was hundreds of zoning codes, ordinances or resolutions. American land-use zoning seemed to have organized in an attempt to control the spread of Chinese laundries in California, first in the city of Modesto, then in San Francisco during the 1880s, and from 1909 onwards, Los Angeles also developed land-use zoning.¹⁶⁸ In the case of Manhattan, zoning was different from almost any other place in America. Here zoning was not concerned with housing, but with regulating land use for commercial ends, as a way to protect the value of existing real state against undesirable invasions, such as garment shops or garment workers, who could invade the prestigious stores of Midtowns.¹⁶⁹

The zoning commission of New York reported in 1916 in favor of 4 types of land-use zone, two of which (residential and commercial), had to be subjected to high restrictions.¹⁷⁰ In 1921, Herbert Hoover, as Secretary of Commerce, created an Advisory Committee on Zoning; it resulted in a Standard State Zoning Enabling Act of 1923, which was adopted by many states in order to give legal authority to city master plans. By 1929, more than 650 municipalities had planning commissions, and 754 communities had adopted zoning ordinances.¹⁷¹

A series of landmark legal judgments culminated in the historic 1926 Euclid Case, before the United States Supreme Court, “Village of Euclid et al. versus Ambler Realty Co.” established the validity of zoning as a legitimate expression of police power. The small village of Euclid in Ohio was near, but clearly outside of urban Cleveland. Farming was its central activity, but the growth of Cleveland started to threaten Euclid’s residents. The Amber Realty Company saw in the rapid expansion of Cleveland and the transportation convenience of their land, the potential for industrial development. The prospect of factories horrified many of the village’s residents, and the case went to the U.S Supreme Court, where the constitutionality of municipal zoning was tested for the first time. The Company lost. The ordinance in Euclid, not only dictated separations between industrial, commercial, and residential districts; it also created different types of residential neighborhoods. Open spaces, high quality public services, limited traffic, and minimal crowding, all made a community more appealing as a place to live. Euclid’s zoning ordinance sought to protect low-density residential areas from overdevelopment, as well as, from incursions by commerce and industry, and the Supreme Court validated that protection as well.¹⁷²

The development of detached house sections is greatly retarded by the coming of apartment houses, which has sometimes resulting in destroying the entire section for private house purposes; that in such sections very often the *apartment house is a mere parasite*, constructed in order to take advantage of the open spaces and attractive surroundings created by the residential character of the district... Apartment houses, which in a different environment would be not only entirely unobjectionable, but also highly desirable, come near to being *nuisances*.¹⁷³

The *Euclid* decision of 1926, gave to local governments of the United States, the power to zone as they wished. From a fiscal point of view, commercial and industrial were the most desirable land uses. Workers' suburbs welcomed factories, not just because they paid for municipal services, but because they offered jobs to residents who could ill afford to commute elsewhere.¹⁷⁴ One result was the organized factory district located in suburbs; they were planned by railway and real estate companies, and supported by local government. In Los Angeles, for example, the construction of the harbor at San Pedro/Long Beach with federal assistance brought new jobs to the southern part of the city. It helped to make possible a rapid expansion in the petroleum and aerospace industries. Both private and publicly sponsored schemes recognized the needs of manufacturers, which growth coalitions often identified with the public good.¹⁷⁵

Case studies of Baltimore and Montreal showed that in the beginning of the twentieth century, companies were creating diverse industrial districts. By 1900, 32 percent of all manufacturing jobs in U.S. metropolitan centers were located beyond city limits. Suburban employment continued to grow, reaching 41 percent of the metropolitan total by 1947.¹⁷⁶ Los Angeles was shaped by manufacturing and dispersed oil production in places such as El Segundo, Fullerton, and Vernon, with associated residential suburbs such as Torrance, Hawthorne, and Huntington Park. After Goodyear established a large factory in 1919, glass, steel, auto, and chemical plants encouraged the growth of new centers of suburban manufacturing, including San Pedro and Long Beach. By 1900, a large industrial district had developed on the eastern banks of the Mississippi in East St. Louis. The construction of a steel mill in South Chicago in 1880 encouraged the rapid expansion of steel and ancillary

production in the southern portion of the city. By 1900, the expanding metropolis had enveloped this area, and new metalworking nodes had developed south in the Calumet district. Each new round of expansion of the auto industry refashioned Detroit's manufacturing geography. For example, the Ford's auto complex moved from the centrally located Piquette plant (1900s) through Highland Park (1910s) to River Rouge (1920s).¹⁷⁷ During the interwar years, an industrial satellite challenged Peoria, Illinois, across the Peoria River.¹⁷⁸ The late 1930s and World War II saw a new phase of industrial investment, led by aircraft, shipbuilding, and Kaiser's steel plant in Fontana. By 1940, Chicago had as many "employing" suburbs as did Los Angeles.

Office decentralization was most common in the manufacturing sector, especially in small- and medium-sized companies. There were a number of advantages in keeping factory and office together. When they moved their production facilities to the suburbs, many manufacturers took their office staff with them. For example, the National Carbon Company moved to Lakeview, Ohio, in the 1890s, and Kodak moved its main Canadian operations from a central location in Toronto to the far suburban fringe in 1917.¹⁷⁹

Since local governments had the power to zone as they wished, nobody could ensure that the concept of zoning would be done for self-interest. As Walker points out "zoning became primarily a static process of attempting to set and preserve the character of certain neighborhoods, in order to preserve property values in these areas, while imposing only nominal restrictions on those areas holding a promise of speculative profit."¹⁸⁰ Examples that support these concerns are the cases of New York and Chicago during the 1920s. Hall argues that far from realizing greater social justice for the poor locked in the tenements of these

cities, the planning and zoning system of the time seemed to be designed precisely to keep them out of the desirable new planned communities in the form of suburbia, where had built along the streetcar tracks and the subway lines.¹⁸¹ As a commentator put it:

The basic purpose of zoning was to keep them where they belonged –out—If they had already gotten in, and then its purpose was to confine them to limited areas. The exact identity of them varied a bit around the country. Blacks, Latinos, and poor people qualified. Catholics, Jews and Orientals were the target in many places. The elderly also qualified, if they were candidates for public housing.¹⁸²

The Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) provided several models for thinking about the settlement patterns of urban regions, and about policies for shaping the decentralization of Western metropolis. The first RPAA members, including Clarence Stein, Lewis Mumford, Benton MacKaye, and Henry Wright, among others, developed the major elements of the ideology and practice of city and regional planning in America after 1925. The RPAA's critical analysis of the modern metropolis was published in 1925, and Stein and Wright's 1926 proposals for a plan for New York State, demonstrate their influence. From 1923 to 1933, the RPAA functioned as a policy research and discussion group that spread its ideas by extensive publication, and tested them by shaping communities. Many of their ideas were too radical even for adoption by Roosevelt's early New Deal; therefore some investigations suggest, such as Francisco Dal Co's research, that the work of this group would become part of the New Deal's ideology.¹⁸³

The migration of affluent families to the urban periphery, and the accompanying status decline of central cities, relative to the suburbs were a gradual process. In the late 1940s, central cities were on higher status than the metropolitan fringe in most metropolitan areas. Suburbs were mainly for working-class individuals, while most prosperous families continued to live inside city limits.

The Boom of Suburbia in America

Prior to the Depression in America, people needed a down payment of between 30 percent and 50 percent to purchase a house, and a long-term loan was 10 years. The *Home Owners Loan Corporation* (HOLC) created in 1933, provided self-amortizing long-term mortgages, and set up the mortgages with uniform payments spread throughout the length of the loan. With the *Federal Housing Administration* (FHA), established by the *National Housing Act* of 1934, a number of worker's housing projects were financed. The addition of *Servicemen's Readjustment Act* of 1944, which created a *Veterans Administration* mortgage program similar to that of FHA, 16 million soldiers of World War II should return to civilian life with a home. The federal government responded to an immediate need for five million new homes, by underwriting a vast new construction program. In the decade after the World War II, Congress regularly approved billions of dollars of additional mortgage insurance for the FHA. An impetus for private developers to build homes was guaranteed. A small down payment not more than 10 percent sufficed and the loan length could be 20 or 30 years.¹⁸⁴ The FHA worked hand-to-hand with federal urban renewal and highway-buildings programs, to remove massive quantity of slums from central areas and place new housing around the

fringes. For example, for the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway, the homes of 5,000 people were taken and 113 streets and 159 buildings were sacrificed.¹⁸⁵

During the war, government and industry both played up the suburban house to the families of absent servicemen, and between 1941 and 1946, some of the nation's most promising architects published their "dream houses" in a series in the *Ladies' Home Journal*.¹⁸⁶ Single-family housing starts spurted from only 114,000 in 1944 to 937,000 in 1946, then to 1,183,000 in 1948 and to 1,692,000 in 1950.¹⁸⁷ In housing, World War II contributed to large businesses. Before 1945, the typical contractor had put up fewer than five houses per year and by 1959, the median single-family builder put up twenty-two structures. As early as 1949, fully 70 percent of new homes were constructed by only 10 percent of the firms, and by 1955, subdivisions accounted for more than three-quarters of all new housing in metropolitan areas.¹⁸⁸

As Girling and Helphand point out, there are substantial costs associated with low-density suburbs: a loss of agricultural land, a decline of air and water quality, and exorbitant costs for sewers, power and roads.¹⁸⁹ People moved to suburbs with the illusion of being near the countryside, but new developments often left them surrounded by more suburbs.¹⁹⁰ Subdivided suburbs located in diverse states within America have surprising resemblances. Girling and Helphand attribute these similarities to two main reasons: The zoning laws and subdivision regulations, which are based on guidelines distributed by national planning associations; and the Federal Housing administration (FHA), which rigorously enforced national standards for neighborhood planning and site and building design.¹⁹¹

The principles and guidelines of the FHA promoted characteristic elements, such as the gently curving streets with cul-de-sac ends, large lots, generous building setbacks, centrally located parks, schools, and shopping centers. Many of these guidelines had notorious resemblances with the earlier planned communities developed in suburban areas for the summer houses of rich business men, especially with the 1920's city of Radburn in New Jersey. The difference was that the new suburbs were not self-dependent communities, but dormitory settlements, many of them dependent on other cities.

From 1945 to beginning of 1960, the new American developments were characterized as "cookie cutter" subdivisions. This kind of subdivision was the result of speculators, who purchased land in single ownership, often converted from agricultural usage, subdivided the property, and sold the resulting lots at significantly higher prices.¹⁹² The FHA mortgage insurance program provided the financial support for mass suburban development, and its land planning service provided the design recipe. If in addition, we consider the legal vehicle, such as zoning laws and subdivision ordinances, the sprawling suburbs were largely stimulated by both private initiatives and governmental institutions.

The FHA Minimum Property Standards were often more detailed than local ordinances.¹⁹³ The two published Manuals of the Federal Housing Administration, *Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses* and *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods*, contained written principles, diagrams, plans and photographs of both good and bad community design. For example, the manuals encourage parks and the preservation of natural features as a "definitive community asset."¹⁹⁴

The Levitt family's company built thousands of inexpensive houses. The company originally built houses for upper-middle income families, but in 1941, Levitt and Sons received a government contract for 1,600 (later increased to 2,350), war worker's homes in Norfolk, Virginia, which marked the beginning of mass market housing for Levitt family.¹⁹⁵ Levittown on Long Island was a planned 2,000 home rental community; the *New York Herald Tribune* reported that half of the properties had been rented within two days of the community being announced on May 7, 1947. As demand rose, exceeding availability, the Levitt family expanded their project with 4,000 more homes as well as community services, including schools and postal delivery. With the full implementation of federal government supports for housing, administered under the FHA, the Levitt firm switched from rental to sale of their houses, offering ownership on a 30 year mortgage with no down payment and monthly costs the same as rental. The resulting surge in demand pressed the firm to further expand its development, which changed its name from Island Trees to Levittown.

In the 1950s, the Levitt family developed a large project near Philadelphia. Located on former broccoli and spinach farms in lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania, this new Levittown was built within a few miles of the new Fairless Works of the United States Steel Corporation, where the largest percentage of the community's residents was employed. 16,000 homes were built late in the decade, and the town included light industry and a big, 55-acre shopping center.¹⁹⁶ In 1952, *House and Home*, the national magazine of home-building industry, reported that at Levittown II "everyone will have its own park when all the trees are grown...streets and shrubs will make this the most completely landscaped city in the country; evergreens screening houses, around each lot, plus thousands of street trees. In

addition to the slow-growing ever greens already planted, each back yard will get three fruit trees.”¹⁹⁷



Figure 11. Aerial View of Levittown 1
Source: Life Magazine (June 1948)



Figure 12. The Cope Code Housing Model
Source: Life Magazine (June 1948)

In the 1960s, the Levitt family developed a third Levittown in Willingboro, New Jersey. The Cape Cod remained the basic style, but Levitt improved the older models to resemble more closely the pseudo-colonial design that was so popular in the Northeast.

A Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of home building in 1946-1947 in six metropolitan regions of the United States, determined that the suburbs were 62 percent of construction. By 1950, the national suburban growth rate was ten times that of central cities, and in 1954, the editors of *Fortune* estimated that 9 million people had moved to the suburbs in the previous decade. The inner cities did have some empty lots, serviced by sewers, electrical connections, gas lines, and streets, available for development.¹⁹⁸ In Los Angeles, the fastest-growing American city in the immediate postwar period, the area of rapid building focused on the San Fernando Valley, had a vast space that had remained largely vacant since its annexation to the city in 1915. In Philadelphia, thousands of new houses were put up in farming areas that had legally been part of the city since 1854, but which in fact had functioned as agricultural settlements for generations.¹⁹⁹

Other characteristics of the postwar suburbs were their relatively low density. Typical lot sizes were relatively uniform around the country, averaging between 1/5 (80 by 100 feet) and 1/10 (40 by 100 feet) of an acre; and varying more with distance from the center than by region. Moreover, the new subdivisions allotted a higher proportion of their land area to streets and open spaces. Levittown, Long Island, for example, was settled at a density of 10,500 per square mile, which was about average for postwar suburbs, but less than half as dense as the streetcar suburbs of a half-century earlier.

THE URBAN MODELS OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT

According to John R. Gold, one of the “Grand Narratives” that has codified knowledge about the origins, development, and purpose of the Modern Movement in architecture, was founded in the idea of *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of the Age), derived from Romantic philosophers and elaborated by art historians. The *Zeitgeist* was first applied to the history of modern architecture by historians, such as Henry Russell Hitchcock,²⁰⁰ Nicolaus Pevsner,²⁰¹ and Sigfried Giedion.²⁰² This narrative sees that every period generated an expression of collective humanity, and these historians saw the Modern Movement in architecture as the appropriate response to a revolutionary age of machinist and rationalistic progress.²⁰³

At the same time that diverse English and American movements clamored for the return to nature and condemned the evils of the overcrowding industrial city, European modernist artists were fascinated with the beauty of the machine; they were sensitive to the emergence of airplanes, locomotives and the development of science and technology. The manifesto of the Italian Futurist Movement, declared in 1909 the predilection for machines, velocity and movement in the visual arts. “We affirm that the splendour of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed.”²⁰⁴ They adopted from the Cubists the decomposition of reality through planes, and the concept of simultaneity, as the way that Cubist and Futurist artists gave sequential and temporal expression to static two-dimensional figures. The celebration of the dynamic condition included *temporality* and *spatiality* as fundamental concepts in all artistic expression of the Modern period.

Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus’ founder, gathered a group of prominent artists from different avant-garde movements, and understood space within its indissoluble relation with

time, was one of the main contents of the Bauhaus school from 1923 to 1927.²⁰⁵ In 1923, Gropius wrote, “all the plastic arts tend to create space and the human being experiments with the spatial reality through the simultaneity of the soul, the mind and the senses; therefore the artist creates space from the synthesis of these three categories.”²⁰⁶ In 1928, Moholy-Nagy presented his treatise “From the Materials to the Architecture,” which was focused in Cubist and Futurist Movements and emphasized the concept of space-time and the fourth dimension.²⁰⁷

Hitchcock, Pevsner and Giedion among others, were the first to write the “official” history of Modern architecture, and actively promoted the movement. Sigfried Gideon, who was trained as a historian in Munich, elaborated an architectural discourse that was articulated around the space-time concept, proposing to several generations of scholars and architects a history of architecture grounded on the history of space. He was appointed in 1928 as General Secretary of the CIAM (International Congress for Modern Architecture), and in 1938, was invited to give lectures at Harvard in the prestigious courses of Charles Eliot Norton. Gideon’s lectures were the material for his influential book *Space, Time, and Architecture*, first published in 1941. Gideon identifies the new space with Modernism, which broke the space conception of Renaissance perspective.²⁰⁸ In modern space, he argued, the eye cannot sum up the complex at one view; it is necessary to go around it on all sides, to see it from above as well as from below. It means new dimensions for the artistic imagination, an unprecedented many-sidedness.²⁰⁹

The spirit that animated the earlier Modernist architects, as an embodied experience of space and time, seems to be a less popular discourse of the Modern Movement. It is

commonly recognized for its “urban imagination” and for the functional principles of their city plans. These principles may be broadly mentioned as rational zoning land-use, separation between home and workspace, and emphasis on transport systems. These principles seem to be shared with other urban models that are not commonly perceived as part of the Modern Movement, such as the traditional garden suburbs with low density. The differences between the ideas that inspired the pioneers of the Modern Movement, and those that supported the Garden Suburb were rooted in ideology: Modernists understood that the future should be seen as an opportunity to break with any pre-existent tradition; the future should be faced using the new technologies, the new aestheticism of simple forms, which were the forms that new materials as tecton permitted; modernist views implied a belief in the socially-redeeming virtues of science and technology.

Modern Models to Achieve Social Transformation

The first significant opportunity for modern architects to participate in programs of social housing was in the Netherlands, when the city authorities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam commissioned schemes for new housing developments.²¹⁰ The City architect of Amsterdam, Hedrick Berlage, designed estates in south Amsterdam between 1902 and 1920. They were intended to be units of collective dwelling, integrating model worker housing into urban living. The Municipal architect of Rotterdam from 1918 and 1930, and one of the founders of the De Stijl group, J.J.P. Oud, designed a series of housing complexes for Rotterdam, such as Spangen, Tusschendijken, Oud Mathenesse and Kiefhoek, which expressed ideological commitment to technology and a sense that architecture may achieve social transformation. The project at Kiefhoek, for example, considered 300 single-family

houses with associated social services.²¹¹ In Austria, Karl Ehn designed, among others, the well-known Karl-Marx-Hof, a large project of public housing built in 1927-1930 in Vienna (see Figure 13). This new typology of buildings was conceived with integral social and communal facilities; the model intended to be a recipe for urban living, rather than simply dwelling units.²¹²

Weimar Germany represented, perhaps, the most illustrative way that modernist architects participated in social housing. After 1918, war damage had destroyed two million dwellings, causing severe overcrowding in Berlin and other German cities. The rate of construction rose from 124,000 dwelling units in 1924, to 320,000 dwelling units in 1929, before the Wall Street crash.²¹³ Germans introduced the *Zeilenbau* (row) housing, a system of rows of flatted housing that were laid out at right angles to an east-west road, rather than the conventional system of flats around an interior courtyard. The north-south alignment of the building ensured that rooms would receive the maximum benefits of sun and light.²¹⁴



Figure 13. Karl-Marx-Hof Vienna Designed by Karl Ehn,
Source: Archives of the Austrian National Library, Vienna
http://www.aeiou.at/aeiou.encyclop.cp_right.image.e/e230443b.htm

Examples of this model were the Italienischegarten and Georgsgarten at Celle, near Hanover, designed by Otto Haesler in 1923-4; and eight major housing developments designed by Ernst May and Martin Elsaesser in Frankfurt, which were built between 1925 and 1929.²¹⁵

These architectonic models were based on industrial techniques of construction, rationalization and ergonomic principles, such as the example of the “Frankfurt Kitchen,” which was conceived as an “industry” for cooking, designed by principles of functionality, hygiene and rationalization of space (see Figure 14).

Walter Gropius, like Le Corbusier, was strongly interested in prefabrication. Gropius was commissioned by the city of Dessau to design a group of prefabricated single-family worker’s houses at Torten. 316 houses were completed in 1928 and partly furnished by the Bauhaus workshops.²¹⁶



Figure 14. Frankfurter Kitchen

Designed by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. Source: <http://www.stylepark.com>

In the “New Frankfurt,” the basic planning strategy was related to Raymond Unwin’s concept of satellite garden suburbs. This approach was new for European cities like Frankfurt, which were typically extended by building along existing streets with perimeter block courtyard housing blocks. By enlarging the streetcar system, planners were able to link the new settlements on open and inexpensive sites back to the old center, providing large green areas in between.²¹⁷ These new designs promoted the idea of collective facilities such as kindergartens, meeting rooms, and parks. The main difference of the Frankfurt model was in terms of the relative profitability per unit.²¹⁸ The new blocks offered the simplicity and repeatability demanded by assembly-line methods of building production.²¹⁹

The establishment of the CIAM in 1928 was the platform that modernist architects would not have received in existing professional bodies. As Gold points out, CIAM fostered collective feelings of shared purpose and helped to codify the mission of the Modern Movement.²²⁰ CIAM’s initial direction was shaped by the interaction of Le Corbusier and other French-speaking proponents of a new architecture, with the mostly German-speaking representatives of a leftist and technocratic approach to architecture and social organization.²²¹

The CIAM 1 statements on “Architecture and Public Opinion” and ‘Architecture and its Relations with State’, represented the way that modern architects saw their role in the future. The statements on “General Economy” argued that the most efficient methods arose from rationalization and standardization; and the five statements on “Town Planning”, affirmed the commitment to a functionalist approach.

Town planning is the organization of the functions of collective life; it embraces the countryside as well as the cities...town planning cannot be determined by the claims of a pre-existing aestheticism; its essence is functional order.²²²

This first sentence seems related to the Communist Manifesto, where Marx and Engels called for the “combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries and a gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country.”²²³

This order consists of three functions, dwelling, producing and relaxation; and the essential objects are land subdivision, regulation of traffic, and building legislation.

The second sentence represented a major characteristic of international thought about planning, especially in North America. Land planning was based on zoning by functional categories, but the main difference between the American approach and the CIAM proposal, was the idea of land redistribution. The third point insisted:

The chaotic division of land, resulting from sales, speculations, inheritances, must be abolished by a collective and methodical land economy; this land redistribution, the indispensable preliminary basis for any town planning, must include the just division between the owners and community of the unearned increment resulting for work of joint interest.²²⁴

During the 1920s, Le Corbusier maintained that he was an apolitical technocrat seeking only to apply the lessons of Taylor and Ford to the production of housing and cities. This attitude lay behind the basic premise that physical design rather than political action could provide solutions for the poor living conditions of industrial cities. Avoiding

“revolution” meant working closely with large interests with the capital to implement his vision of social and architectural transformation. In his book, *Cities of Tomorrow*, he suggested that Paris should be rebuilt along the lines of his *Ville Contemporaine* with foreign capital.²²⁵ Although given their divergent political views, there was substantial agreement on an implementation strategy for the new CIAM urbanism, even if Le Corbusier’s own political views favored the leadership of strong industrialists and other capitalists.²²⁶

The second CIAM of 1929 was focused on design solutions to the problem of high rents for low wage earners. CIAM 2 produced 38 page questionnaires entitled- “Hygienic and Economic Foundations of the Minimal Dwelling.”

The growing debate of among advocates of the new architecture over forms of site planning was reinforced by developments in the Soviet Union. In the beginnings of 1930, the government sponsored a major competition for a decentralized “Socialist Garden City” for 100,000 people. With its “rational organization of leisure”, the city was conceived of as a vast “model proletarian health clinic” for Moscow’s workers.²²⁷ In February of 1930, Le Corbusier was asked to give his opinion on the Green Cities, which he did in his 1930 “Commentaries Relative to Moscow and the Green City,”²²⁸ arguing that economic, social, and cultural life were all dependent on a high density of settlements. He believed that the true solution to the problem of the existing city was neither self-contained small centers of the misnamed urbanists, nor the disurbanist linear city. He repeated his advocacy of a reconfigured high-density core surrounded by housing set amidst greenery, the same ideas that he had already put in his plans of the “Ville Contemporaine.”²²⁹



Figure 15. Plan Voisin, Le Corbusier, 1925

Source: Fondation Le Corbusier

The reaction of the Soviet architects to the “Response to Moscow” was generally hostile; Nikolai Miliutin, for example, charged that skyscrapers were “the last cry of capitalism,” while Sergei Gorny condemned Le Corbusier’s “reactionary” plan for continuing the “framework of old property relations.”²³⁰

Le Corbusier modified his city model and presented the *Ville Radieuse* in the third CIAM Congress of 1930. In the *Ville Radieuse* the architectural and urban strategies were explained through organic metaphors. It moved from the fixed perspectival panorama toward a more open-ended conception of urbanism. Le Corbusier, in his explanatory lecture about his model city in the CIAM 3, argued that “the subdivision of the land in cities” had to be done by demolishing existing cities and rebuilding them with buildings of high densities. In fact, the real theme of CIAM 3 was a discussion of Gropius’s question, Low-mid or high-rise building?²³¹ The newspaper report stated that the Congress had agreed that “the apartment house of the future” would be a high-rise set in greenery. The records of CIAM 3 suggested

that the delegates agreed with Gropius that middle-rise apartment housing should be abandoned in favor of either single-family houses or collective high-rises set in greenery.²³²

The lectures and the commentary on the plans made the CIAM urban discourse of 1930 very clear: it excluded Garden City, Beaux-Arts, as well as, any kind of explicit “formalism.” The focus was the problem of mass housing, and the discourse was more concerned with promoting the replacement of the existing urban pattern in favor of widely spaced high-rises set in greenery, along the lines laid down by Gropius and Le Corbusier and shared by Neutra and other members of the CIAM.²³³

The theme of CIAM 4 was focused on the functional city. The CIAM groups worked to cover five main points: (1) Opinions on existing cities and new settlements; (2) the role of the historic buildings and parts of town in the modern city; (3) principles of orientation to the sun; (4) size and situation of places for education and recreation; and (5) the modern street and its relation to dwellings.²³⁴ The published “Constatations” from CIAM 4, emphasized that cities are part of an economic, social, and political system. CIAM found that population densities were typically too high in historic centers and their conditions were unhealthy. Under “Requirements,” CIAM demanded that housing districts should occupy the best sites, and a minimum amount of solar exposure should be required in all dwellings. For hygienic reasons, buildings should not be built along transportation routes, and apartments should be spaced to free soil for large green parks. Under “Leisure,” CIAM called for demolition of the central areas of high density and no open spaces, to be turned into green spaces, with schools and facilities. Under “Work,” CIAM found that workplaces were usually not well situated and they recommended that travel distances should be located adjacent to transportation

routes. They proposed that rigorous statistical methods be used to establish rational street widths. Under “Historic Districts of the City,” CIAM stated that historic monuments should be respected and main traffic routes should be routed around them. As a conclusion, CIAM stated that dwelling should be considered as the “primordial element of urbanization.”²³⁵

In the winter before the CIAM 4, the MARS Group was founded in Britain in order to create an English CIAM group. MARS continued to meet regularly through the fall of 1933 and the spring of 1934, in order to develop a program of “slum clearance.” MARS sent delegates to the next CIAM Congresses and it played an important role in the post-war Congress CIAM VI of 1947, and in CIAM VIII of 1951.²³⁶

Modern Movement in Britain

As John Gold points out, British modernists were more concerned about applying Modernism to individual buildings or interior designs than with wider issues. Neighborhood design or city planning was restricted to a small group; most of them were part of the MARS group and linked with the CIAM. As Arthur Ling noted, the curriculum in the British design schools, during the late 1930s, did not ascribe to modern attitudes. Professors “adored everything that was Georgian...and looked with disfavor on the Modern movement.”²³⁷ After 1935, the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, which had taught town planning since 1909, developed an openly eclectic approach under the direction of Patrick Abercrombie and Charles Reilly.²³⁸

The architect Percy Johnson Marshall forwarded the strong political commitment of the Modern movement in architecture. “The idea that animates us in the 1930s was the feeling that we had to make a revolution: the social ideal of planning for everybody.”²³⁹ Others, such as Coates and Chermayeff, saw town planning more as an extension of reformist debate about health and sanitation, rather than in terms of bringing greater social and spatial equality of resources.²⁴⁰

As Johnson Marshall suggested, before the war, the shared viewpoints included preferences for the absence of ornamentation in buildings, the use of advanced techniques of construction, expressed mainly in mass production and standard patterns. The key to rational planning was the use of land zoning to separate functions and advocacy of flats, especially for mass housing. Constructing blocks of flats allowed the creation of open space that could be used by the population as a whole.²⁴¹

British Social Housing

For the British government, the provision of housing became a central issue at the end of World War One. Various Acts were passed to survey housing needs and draw up plans, such as the 1919 Addison Housing and Town Planning Act,²⁴² the 1923 Chamberlain Housing Act,²⁴³ which reduced the housing subsidy to local authorities, and the Financial Provisions Housing Act of 1924, introduced by John Wheatley, the Minister of Health. The Wheatley Act survived the Baldwin government during the 1920s, and 500,000 houses were built. Under Labour government, the Greenwood Housing Act of 1930 addressed slum clearance by providing subsidy and obliging local authorities to re-house tenants. This policy was reversed under the Conservative-strong coalition government, and in 1933, the Financial Provisions Housing Act abolished the Wheatley subsidy. The emphasis was now on the construction of cheaper blocks of flats to house former slum dwellers. The idea of new housing really took off after World War One, with government promises of “homes fit for heroes,” and the complete programme estimated that four million houses came under consideration.²⁴⁴ The plan considered urban improvement or internal remodeling in the clearance areas; the definition of the external growth of cities, considering, not only the normal increase of population, but also the proportion of population that cannot be re-housed at the centre; and country planning, providing forms of urban extension. The plan as well as, included the completion of the main electric grid in order to distribute industries, water supply for country areas to permit their densification, a net of road distribution by parkways to deliver people at certain places only, and the plan of recreational places, leading to the preservation of certain areas for National Parks.²⁴⁵

Abercrombie wrote in 1935, a set of suggestions to complement the re-housing plan, that included the examination of zoning, traffic, open spaces, civic center, schools, and definitions of density.²⁴⁶ He gave especial emphasis to density in order to arrive at some standard, which “while providing adequate light and air open space, can be multiplied without danger.”²⁴⁷ Abercrombie expressed his concern about the density of the re-housing plan to locate people who occupied the slums:

The garden Suburb post-war, as indeed the co-partnership pre-war, were never slum clearance projects. They were inhabited by the well-to-do smaller business man, the shop assistant, clerical classes and higher-paid skilled artisan...But the inhabitants of the slum represent a quite distinct class, living for a century and a half under close urban confinement and possessed of small means or aptitude for garden suburb conditions, yet requiring fresh air and the very best conditions which can be devised for their happiness and health...Something quite new and distinct is required, whether it be satellitely disposed or form part of general spread.²⁴⁸

The destruction produced by aerial bombardment, in addition with the effects of population increase, which was a rise of one million between 1939 and 1945,²⁴⁹ allowed that in 1946, the post-war Labour government tried to meet the housing shortage through the construction of prefabs houses and repairs of existing structures, while the longer-term measures depended on the development of housing by local authorities. The 1946 Housing Act increased the subsidy available to local authorities, and they were allowed to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board. In 1949, the Housing Act enabled local authorities to

build houses for the population generally, rather than only for the poor, and 1.5 million public homes were constructed by 1951.

The models of massive housing and city plans proposed by the Modern Movement, understood as intended to achieve a social transformation, was used by many governments to implement social policies related with the poorest sectors of the population. In economical terms, developing high-density apartments, built by prefabricated techniques, was a cheaper solution in comparison with the extended suburbs, which implied more portions of land, more investment in roads, power and sanitary lines.

The new niche functioned as an opportunity to modern architects, who in particular were interested in the urban-scale design and shared an ideological commitment to public service. New positions were created in the municipalities and in central government agencies, such as the Ministry of Town Planning. By 1950, over 50 percent of all qualified architects worked in the public sector.²⁵⁰

The New Town Act received the royal consent and it represented an important part of the ideology of the new government.²⁵¹ Between 1946 and 1951, the Labour government designated 14 new towns in Britain; eight for the London area, two for Scotland, two for the east-north England, one in Wales and one in the English Midlands.²⁵² New towns absorbed more than 400,000 inhabitants, a mere fraction of the population growth in the belt around London in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁵³

The first new towns developed urban concepts that were shared by the Garden City model and the Modern Movement, such as master planning, separation of function, abolition

of the traditional street by the segregation of circulation systems, and neighborhood units.²⁵⁴

When the New Towns Committee was established in 1945, they considered:

The general questions of the establishment, development, organization and administration that will arise in the promotion of New Towns in furtherance of a policy of planned decentralization from congested areas; and in accordance therewith to suggest guiding principles on which such towns should be established and developed as self-contained and balanced communities for living and working.²⁵⁵

John Gold explains that it is not clear that the 14 first new towns represent the triumph of the Garden City ideals, especially because the architects involved in drawing up the plans had connections with the pre-war Modern Movement: Frederick Ernest Gibberd at Harlow, Gordon Stephenson and Peter Shephard at Stevenage, William Holford at Corby, Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin at Peterlee, and Lionel Brett at Hatfield, and later at Basildon.²⁵⁶

Although the purposes declared in 1945 mentioned decentralization, an ideal population of 30,000-60,000 inhabitants, and self-contained notions, which were some of the principles of the Garden City model, new elements were added, and they were out of the Howard's conception. In Hatfield, for example, Lionel Brett struggled in vain to raise high densities in order to give a sense of urbanity, as a response against the suburban densities of Welwyn; and Gibberd added a ten-storey block of flats to the Mark Hall neighborhood at Harlow new town. The Peterlee Development Corporation was established in 1948, and Lubetkin, which included towering blocks of flats; developed the master plan, however this

plan was rejected as unsuitable for the geology of the area, which had been weakened by mining works. The national Coal Board required that the new town was planned only as a dispersed settlement, such as it had been originally conceived by C.W. Clarke, the municipal engineer of Easington Rural District. The debacle at Peterlee contributed to create official resistance to modern architecture and its planning ideals in Britain, and as Gold notes, suburbia had seemingly triumphed over the city.²⁵⁷

According to Stephen Bailey, the model for most postwar social housing and new towns developed between 1946 and 1970, “was richly evocative of an architectural debate whose poles were determined by peculiarly English prejudices: anti-urban, pro-country and class-based.”²⁵⁸ New towns developed an architectural style that was a polite sort of modernism, thought “to be incompatible with anything more backward, or, indeed, anything more forward.”²⁵⁹

The Modern Movement in America

Between 1890 and 1940, a series of technological innovations transformed Chicago and other East Coast cities, especially New York. The skyscrapers represented how America faced the city of the future. In 1891, the architect Louis Sullivan published a newspaper article that envisaged a city of skyscrapers.²⁶⁰ His drawings suggested blocks of high buildings, which were situated on a grid of wide highways (see Figure 16).



Figure 16. Sullivan's Drawings of 1891

Source: *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (May 1970)

While skyscrapers encouraged the densification and centralization, the focus was exclusively in business districts rather than in housing concentrations, and the huge investments in transportation infrastructure, such as railroads and parkways, promoted the decentralization of residences in American cities. When the New York City subway opened in 1904, the *New York Times* declared, “In modern city life, distance is now measured in time.”²⁶¹ The skyscraper was a very American type of building. Its model was developed in the American metropolis after the invention of the elevator, which could encourage the vertical expansion with the possibility of concentrating greater amounts of business activity

on relatively small parcels.²⁶² Early skyscrapers were modeled on a historical precedent, with many ornaments such the case of Sullivan's Chicago buildings; but after the First World War, architects began to develop a non-revival style. The case of the Chrysler Building, designed by William Van Alen in 1930, used geometric patterns of decoration. The most progressive skyscraper was the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society Building, designed by George Howe and William Lescaze in 1929-32.

However in the late 1920s, American familiarity with the achievements of the European Modern Movement architecture was limited to only a small group of intellectuals.²⁶³ The style that dominated in this time was a Cubist-inspired version of Art Deco, which had been introduced at the Paris Exposition of 1925. The Art Deco look was displayed in the major department stores such as Macy's; Lord & Taylor, and John Wanamaker.²⁶⁴

The architectural historian Henry Russell Hitchcock, began to publish articles about the European modern architecture, and contributed to promote it among American architects. In 1932, Hitchcock and Philip Johnson directed the *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, which was presented in the recently founded Museum of Modern Art of New York (MoMA)²⁶⁵ (see Figure 17). With models, photographs and plans of modern projects and modern mass-housing projects of Germany and America, the directors of the exhibition aimed to present the new architecture as a worldwide consensus, deeply united with progressive social concerns. The show ran for six years, displaying a movement that for the first time was announced as an emerging "global" style.²⁶⁶ In December 1930, Johnson submitted to A. Conger Goodyear, the president of the board of trustees of the MoMA, a

preliminary proposal for the exhibition on modern architecture, which was revised later, and published by Johnson in March 1931 with the title “Built to Live In”. In this proposal, the need for an exhibition of modern architecture is explained below:

There exists today both here in America and abroad a marked activity in architecture. Technical advances, new methods and fresh thoughts are solving contemporary building problems in a manner that can truly be called modern. A progressive group of architects, who have put aside traditional forms and are striking out along new and vigorous lines, are at work.²⁶⁷

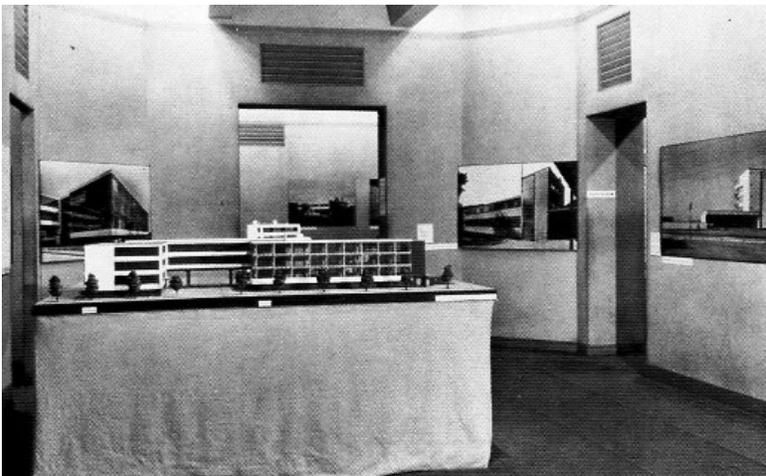


Figure 17. View of Walter Gropius' Work, in the International Exhibition of 1932 at MoMA Museum
Source: In Riley (1992) “The Installation Plan”, 71

In the program for the exhibition, three principal divisions were defined: The section of “Modern Architects,” which included models, photographs and projects of the most prominent architects: Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, J.J.P. Oud, Walter Gropius, the Bowman Brothers, Richard Neutra, and Raymond Hood; “Housing”

section presented “the need for a new domestic environment,” as it was identified by Lewis Mumford; and “The Extent of Modern Architecture,” a section that included works of 37 modern architects from 15 countries, who were influenced by the works of Europeans of 1920s.²⁶⁸ Tabibi suggests that Johnson and Hitchcock, who published numerous texts after the exhibition, played a relevant role as narrators, who interpreted and re-identified the product, in this case, the modern movement, by naming it as the “International Style.” According to Tabibi, “the principles for the new style are derived from the experiences of those who prepared the exhibition and the accompanying publications.” The International Style ‘is the imagination of Johnson and Hitchcock that define the new emerging style in architecture,’ and even though it is criticized because of its *reductionist stereotype*, “this definition still preserves its validity today.”²⁶⁹

The exhibition received positive and negative comments, but Frank Lloyd Wright launched the most “vituperative” judgment on the new architecture. A month before the exhibition opened, in January 1932, Wright requested not to be included because he believed that the exhibition might cast a shadow on his career, and then he rejected to continue to take place in the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue, and from April 1932 onwards, the works of Wright were removed.²⁷⁰

Probably the exhibition played an important role in the future of architectural education in America. As Peter Blake points out:

Soon after the 1932 exhibition closed, architectural education in the US changed radically, from the traditional routines inherited from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to something quite close to Bauhaus in spirit. Only four years after the Modern

Architecture exhibition closed at MoMA, Mies van der Rohe was invited to head the School of Architecture at the Armour Institute in Chicago, and Gropius was invited to head the architectural program at Harvard. And within another ten years or so, there was hardly a single school of architecture in the US not dominated by the ideas first advanced by the International Style architects in Europe, and first publicized in the 1932 exhibition mounted at MoMA by Philip Johnson and his friends.²⁷¹

In the same sense Terence Riley argues that-

While critics' and historians' opinions of the merits of the International Style vary widely, the importance of Exhibition 15 in relation to the subsequent history of American architecture is rarely disputed. The substantive effects of the exhibition are many: the introduction of the European architectural avant-garde, particularly Mies van der Rohe, to America; the increased visibility and acceptance of modernist architects before the Second World War; and the postwar emergence of the "Harvard School" under the leadership of Walter Gropius.²⁷²

Social Housing in America

While the New Deal encouraged the ownership of housing built in suburbia, the tenements of big cities continued to be seen as spaces of vice, perversion and criminality. In 1937, the Housing Act was passed, which established a permanent public housing program and slum eradication from the cities.

To provide financial assistance to the States and political subdivisions thereof for the elimination of unsafe and insanitary housing conditions, for the eradication of slums, for the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income, and for the reduction of unemployment and the stimulation of business activity, to create a United States Housing Authority, and for other purposes.²⁷³

Public housing means public obligation to socially and economically marginal people in America. Before there were model tenements, zoning laws, philanthropic developers, settlement houses, working-class suburbs, private charities, houses of industry, etc. The Puritans, whose state combined civil and ecclesiastical elements to maintain order, emphasized the potential spiritual possibilities of public assistance, or the model of *Christian Charity*.²⁷⁴ From the late 1930s through at least the mid-1950s, city leaders used the public housing projects to reward the most meritorious of the working poor. With the New Deal, housing reformers had accomplished the belief that housing reform was necessary to solve the social problems related to urban poverty.²⁷⁵ During the tenure that lasted until 1937, the Public Works Administration (PWA) Housing Division built 51 public housing projects.²⁷⁶

Historians such as James T. Patterson,²⁷⁷ Leonard Friedman,²⁷⁸ Mark Gelfand,²⁷⁹ Rachel Bratt,²⁸⁰ and Daniel Rodgers,²⁸¹ suggest that the 1937 Act put enormous power in the hands of interest groups and conservatives, encouraging policies of construction with cost limits and restrictive site selection, generating cheap public housing for the poor.

Housing experiments in Britain and Europe were used as models for public housing in America; Edith Wood and Catherine Bauer, among others, envisioned a massive housing program that would house not only the poor, but two-thirds of the American population.²⁸² The new environment of these new projects had to be the opposite of the urban slum, and the public housing had a distinctive image, which was the result of a mix between the garden city with its open and green spaces, with European modernist styles. This image was developed through garden apartment blocks buildings.

The modernist oriented designers celebrated the European *Zeilenbau* style, in which parallel rows of two-to-four-storey apartments buildings were aligned along an east-west orientation and situated in large blocks that exceed standard city blocks sizes.²⁸³ During the 1930s, Oskar Stonorov and Alfred Kastner with Pope Barney, created an early prototype of the American *Zeilenbau* style at the Carl Mackley Houses, which was built in 1933-34 in Philadelphia for the Hosiery Workers Union. This project was begun before the start of the public housing program.

Other examples were Techwood Homes in Atlanta; Harlem River Houses in New York; Lakeview Terrace in Cleveland, Ohio, which had high standards of green space and amenities. Most projects built in the first generation of public housing fell short of these high architectonic standards, such as the case of Old Harbor Village in Boston; Jane Addams

Houses in Chicago; and Willert Park in Buffalo, which were functional-modern looking design with no more attention in the landscaping design.²⁸⁴ As von Hoffman notes, the fact that the new housing developments were composed of apartments, also contributed to the distinctive image of public housing. At the time, over three-quarters of all American families lived in single-family houses.²⁸⁵

During the late 1950s and 1960s, the high-rise projects came to dominate the image of American public housing. Now the inspiration came from Le Corbusier's versions of towers. For example, the Robert Taylor Homes, built in 1962 in the south side of Chicago, consisted in several buildings of 16-storey apartments that contained over 4,300 units.

According to Marcuse, in America housing emerged as a problem, because its implications in issues such as fire or disease dangers, issues that were focused primarily on social order and the protection of real estate values.²⁸⁶

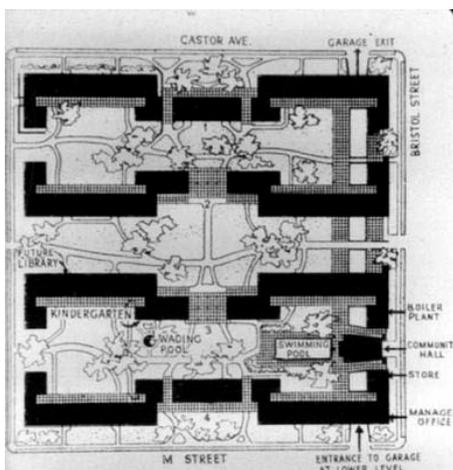


Figure 18. Carl Mackley Houses, Philadelphia 1933-4

Source: The Journal Arts & Architecture, 1942 Columbia University from <http://www.columbia.edu>



Figure 19. First Public Housing in New York, 1935

Opening ceremony on East 3rd Street in the East Village, December 3, 1935. Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu



Figure 20. Greene Houses Brooklyn, 1946

Completed in 1944, the project covered 41 acres, contained 35 buildings, about 3,500 apartments, and housed up to 13,000 people. Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu



Figure 21. Jane Adams Homes, Chicago, 1938

32 buildings of 2, 3, and 4 storey (987 units). Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu



Figure 22. Pomonok Houses, Queens, New York, 1952

35 buildings, 3, 7 and 8-stories high on 51.98-acres with 2,070 apartments housing an estimated 4,204 people. Completed June 30, 1952, the complex is bordered by 65th And 71st Avenues, Parsons and Kissena Boulevards. Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu



Figure 23. Williamson Houses, Brooklyn, 1938

20 buildings, four-storey residential buildings occupy twelve city blocks. Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu



Figure 24. Harlem River Houses, New York, 1935

Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu

FINDINGS CHAPTER 2

RQ (1) What were the most predominant urban models and architectural models of housing developed during the first-half of the 20th Century in America and Britain?

The main urban models developed during the first-half of the twentieth century in America and Britain were the Garden City Model, which was extensively developed in both countries; and the “Radiant City” proposed by the Modern Movement, which was partially used to design specific projects in the form of social housing and some new Towns in Britain. The separation between zones within the industrial cities, which was one of the main urban principles proposed by the Modern Movement, was extensively applied in the plans for cities of both countries.

America encouraged the single-family house, and apartment buildings were mainly low-price solutions for social housing. In Britain, the same strategy was used, promoting apartment buildings for social housing too. The cities of both countries strongly promoted the dispersion of new neighborhoods, rather than the concentration of housing in the inner city. The development of highways and railways helped in this process of dispersion as well as the promotion of car ownership, especially in America.

One of the findings of this Chapter reveals that both urban models competed in the same period, and the arguments that supported the Garden City model and the models promoted by the Modern Movement were all based on the green ideal.

RQ (2) What were the main discourses associated with these models?

Siegfried Giedion used the title “Destruction or Transformation?” in one chapter of his book *Space, Time, and Architecture*. This question may summarize one of the issues that architects and planners discussed during the first-half of the twentieth century. Giedion described the several suggestions that have been made in order to define the most convenient strategy to city planning, and realized that even when strategies vary, they share a common tendency, which is based on the “organic,” understood as a “kind of self-protection against the evils of civilization.” Then the difference between the proposals lies in how the organic may be realized.²⁸⁷ The organic of Giedion has much to do with the green ideal described in this chapter.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the green argument emerged as discourse and as a clear opposition to the overcrowded and unhealthy industrial city. The green environment became the best form to improve the life conditions of the population, in order to ensure the common well being, the productivity and the economical stability of the system. The green argument was installed as a social logic and as an unquestionable truth; it was based on rationalistic and scientific rigor, including social studies, statistical surveys, which were supported by the expertise of professionals, as well as, it was supported by governmental institutions.

The surveys of the time explained that the overbuilt and overcrowded settlements with low hygienic conditions helped to propagate physical illness and affected the health conditions of the workers. These conditions became to be associated with other moral behaviors, establishing, from a supposed scientific approach, that overcrowding generates

crime, vice and perversion. As Foucault pointed out, these scientific truths about human nature are often mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society; they are just the outcome of contingent historical forces, and are not necessarily scientifically grounded truths.

From a genealogical approach, the green argument as an idyllic hope had been rooted in ancient traditions. What happened at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was that this argument functioned as an opposite to the evils of the city, and it was validated as a clear unit of discourse and became a form of knowledge.

The modern state, as the entity that was developed above individuals, used biopolitics and pastoral power to “save” individuals from their precarious life, under the condition that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns of discipline and self-regulation.

Institutions, such as urban planning areas, sociology departments at universities, political leaders, recognized artists, or influential writers, were the various institutions from which the authorities spoke; they validated this discourse and transformed it in an unquestionable truth. The urban models, both the Garden City and the Modern Movement, used the green discourse as the solution for the housing of the population. All these group of statements, which were systematically repeated, formed the elements of integration, where the relations of power were articulated in forms, forms of visibility, as institutional apparatus, and forms of statements, as its rules. Through precise laws that regulated the use of the space and encourage the use of the models for governmental plans, the discourse was imposed over the population.

While the Garden City Model proposed the strategy of green low-density towns that articulated their functions around factories; the models of the Modern Movement proposed housing in form of high-density apartments. Both saw functionality and zoning use as the main principle to organize the city space, and both advocated fresh air, sunlight and green environment in form of parks.

The hygienist discourse that linked overcrowded dwellings with criminality seems to be part of the historical a priori of the time, which started from Victorian reform discourse. Surprisingly, in America and Britain, the modern movement in architecture was used to built work spaces in the form of offices and factories; schools, universities, and commercial buildings. Both countries also used the models of the Modern Movement to solve the problems of the social housing, where the same “pathologies” detected in the nineteenth century were still valid. The rest, the houses for the middle-upper-classes, continued to be designed in both countries by low-density, self-contained communities with greenery, curved streets and cul-de-sacs, were located out of inner cities and work places. These self-contained communities, homogeneous by ethnicity and social class, seem to represent the ideal between the first-half of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 3

THE DISCOURSE OF THE CITY IN FILMS

Introduction

Cities on screens are constructed urban and architectonic spaces, and the film medium was one site where urban planning and architectonic ideas were mirrored and given a material reality. This Chapter presents the research on American and British films between the 1930s and the 1960s, in order to respond to RQ (3) and RQ (4).

The project considers a body of films that includes both fictional films and documentaries. As I explained in the methodological considerations discussed in Chapter 1, the criteria for the selection of fiction films implies those films, which the story is articulated around (1) a city and its social life that is influenced by the city space; (2) a community which is organized in certain spaces that influence their communitarian life; and (3) domestic spaces that frame the lifestyle of their inhabitants. On the other hand, the documentaries examined in this study are those that specifically speak about the city space. The British fiction films are fewer than the American ones, because the films produced in Britain were ostensibly less than the American production. For example, between 1930 and 1939, 1,740 films were produced in Britain, in contrast with 4,909 produced in the United States during the same period.¹

To respond to RQ (3) *What were the most predominant urban models and architectonic models of housing that were commented on by American and British films during the 1930s and 1960s?* The study considers a number of 87 films in order to identify the urban models and housing models that were shown in these films. This analysis is

predominantly a formal analysis, emphasizing the pro-filmic elements, or what kind of city and houses were placed in front of the camera.

To respond to RQ (4) *How were urban discourses commented on by American and British films during the 1930s and 1960s as portrayed through specific film genres?* The study compares the rhetorical practices and film techniques that were used to depict spaces in specific historical genres. This analysis aims to illuminate, if there exists concordance between certain film genres and certain discourses of the city and its spaces.

List of Films Examined for the Study

American Fictional Films

- (1932) *Grand Hotel* directed by Edmund Goulding
- (1933) *Wild Boys of the Road* directed by William Wellman
- (1934) *Our Daily Bread* directed by King Vidor
- (1936) *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* directed by Frank Capra
- (1937) *Nothing Sacred* directed by William Wellman
- (1937) *Dead End* directed by William Wylder
- (1937) *Boy of the Streets* directed by William Night
- (1938) *Angels with Dirty Faces* directed by Michael Curtiz
- (1938) *Boys Town* directed by Busby Berkeley
- (1939) *One Third of the Nation* directed by Dudley Murphy
- (1939) *Dark Victory* directed by Edmund Goulding
- (1939) *The Women* directed by George Cukor
- (1940) *Our Town* directed by Sam Wood
- (1942) *Kings Row* directed by Sam Wood
- (1943) *The More the Merrier* directed by George Stevens
- (1944) *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* directed by Preston Sturges
- (1944) *Going My Way* directed by Leo McCarey
- (1944) *Meet me in St. Louis* directed by Vicente Minnelli
- (1944) *Hail the Conquering Hero* directed by Freddie Steele
- (1945) *Scarlet Street* directed by Fritz Lang

- (1945) *The Lost Weekend* directed by Billy Wilder
- (1946) *It's a Wonderful Life* directed by Frank Capra
- (1946) *The Stranger* directed by Orson Welles
- (1946) *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy* directed by Willis Goldbeck
- (1947) *The Magic Town* directed by Robert Ruskin
- (1947) *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer* directed by Irvin Reis
- (1948) *The Street with No Name* directed by William Keighley
- (1948) *The Naked City* directed by Jules Dassin
- (1948) *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream Home* directed by H.C. Potter
- (1950) *Dark City* directed by William Dieterle
- (1949) *The Fountainhead* directed by King Vidor
- (1950) *Where the Sidewalk Ends* directed by Otto Preminger
- (1950) *The Asphalt Jungle* directed by John Huston
- (1950) *Panic in the Streets* directed by Elia Kazan
- (1951) *Father's Little Dividend* directed by Vicente Minnelli
- (1951) *Love Nest* directed by Joseph Newman
- (1952) *Kansas City Confidential* directed by Phil Karlson
- (1954) *Down Three Dark Streets* directed by Arnold Laven
- (1954) *On the Waterfront* directed by Elia Kazan
- (1955) *The Naked Street* directed by Maxwell Shane
- (1955) *All That Heaven Allows* directed by Douglas Sirk
- (1957) *Sweet Smell of Success* directed by Alexander Mackendrick

- (1957) *An Affair To Remember* directed by Leo McCarey
- (1959) *Don't Eat the Daisies* directed by Charles Walters
- (1959) *Imitation of Life* directed by Douglas Sirk
- (1960) *Pillow Talk* directed by Michael Gordon
- (1960) *The Apartment* directed by Billy Wilder
- (1961) *Return To Peyton Place* directed by Jose Ferrer
- (1962) *Two for the Seesaw* directed by Robert Wise
- (1963) *Come Blow your Horn* directed by Bud Yorkin
- (1963) *Who is Been Sleeping in My Bed* directed by Daniel Mann
- (1964) *Send Me No Flowers* directed by Norman Jewison
- (1964) *Sex and the Single Girl* directed by Richard Quine
- (1966) *Any Wednesday* directed by Robert Ellis Miller

American Documentaries

- (1935) *Better Housing* (News Flashes)
- (1939) *The City* directed by Steiner and Van Dyke
- (1946) *Homes for Veterans* directed by George Freedland
- (1948) *A Place to Live* directed by Irving Lerner
- (1949) *For the Living* directed by Leo Seltzer and Lewis Jacobs
- (1957) *The Monsato House of the Future* produced by Bat State Film Productions

British Fictional Films

- (1939) *The Stars Look Down* directed by Carol Reed
- (1941) *The Common Touch* directed by John Baxter
- (1941) *Love in a Dole* directed by John Baxter
- (1943) *The Demi-Paradise* directed by Anthony Asquith
- (1943) *Million Like Us* directed by Sidney Gilliant and Franc Launder
- (1944) *This Happy Breed* directed by David Lean
- (1947) *Brighton Rock* directed by John and Roy Boulting
- (1947) *It Always Rains on Sunday* directed by Robert Hamer
- (1947) *Odd Man Out* directed by Carol Reed
- (1948) *London Belongs to Me* directed by Sidney Gilliant
- (1950) *Night and the City* directed by Jules Dassin
- (1950) *The Blue Lamp* directed by Basil Dearden
- (1952) *The Card* directed by Ronald Neame
- (1958) *Violent Playground* directed by Basil Dearden
- (1958) *Room at the Top* directed by Jack Clayton
- (1959) *Look Back in Anger* directed by Tony Richardson
- (1960) *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* directed by Karel Reisz
- (1961) *A Taste of Honey* directed by Tony Richardson
- (1962) *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* directed by Tony Richardson
- (1965) *Darling* directed by John Schlesinger

British Documentaries

- (1935) *Housing Problems* directed by Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey
- (1937) *The Great Crusade: One Million Houses for the People* Production Manager:
Fred Watts
- (1939) *Home for Workers* Produced by National Film Agency of Manchester
- (1942) *New Town for Old* directed by John Eldridge
- (1942) *Development of the English Town* directed by Mary Field
- (1945) *Proud City* directed by Ralph Keene
- (1946) *The Way We Live* directed by Jill Craigie

**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY AND ITS HOUSING MODELS IN
AMERICAN AND BRITISH FILMS BETWEEN THE 1930S AND 1960S**

The dense metropolis is the predominant urban model shown on screen; it is represented in 63 of the 87 films examined in this study: in 32 American fiction films, in 4 American documentaries and in all the 27 British films, including fiction and documentaries.

Many films represent the metropolis through aerial shots; American films tend to portray New York City and its skyscrapers as the most identifiable symbol of metropolitan life. In films such as *Nothing Sacred*, *Dead End*, *One Third of the Nation*, *The Magic Town*, *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, *The Fountainhead*, *Love Nest*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *An Affair to Remember*, *The Apartment*, and *Two for the Seesaw*, aerial views are frequently used when the film opens, and they serve to contextualize the city where the story takes place (see Figure 25). In the same way, the opening of the films *The More the Merrier* and *Kansas Confidential* use long shots of Washington DC and Kansas City to contextualize the story. Aerial views of London at opening sequences are also used in films, such as *This Happy Breed*, *London Belongs to Me*, *Night and the City*, and in the documentary *Proud City*.



Figure 25. Aerial Views of New York and its Skyscrapers in American Films

In the same way, the film *Odd Man Out* opens with aerial views of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and in *Million Like Us*, the film begins with a Londoner family that goes to Brighton,

which is shown by aerial shots of crowded beaches. This town is also the scenario of the film *Brighton Rock*. Documentaries such as *Home for Workers*, uses aerial views of Liverpool, as well as, *The Way we Live*, includes aerial shots of Plymouth. *A Place to Live*, shows downtown Philadelphia, and *For the Living*, portrays New York's skyscrapers (see Figure 26 for the representation of cities through aerial views).



Home for Workers, 1939 (U.K.)



This Happy Breed, 1944 (U.K.)



Proud City, 1945 (U.K.)



The Way We Live, 1946 (U.K.)



Odd Man Out, 1947 (U.K.)



London Belongs to Me, 1948 (U.K.)



A Place to Live, 1948 (U.S.)



For the Living, 1949 (U.S.)



Night and the City, 1950 (U.K.)

Figure 26. Aerial Views to Represent Cities

The use of aerial, high angle camera shots, to portray the metropolis, not only serves to contextualize where the story takes place. Frequently, it is used to represent the immensity and anonymity of big cities. On the other hand, aerial views function as urban imageries that reinforce the identification between inhabitants and the city. Specifically, New York and its skyscrapers symbolize the romantic view of urban progress, in the same way that the London Bridge, the Big Ben, and the King Cross Rail Station represent to Londoners the tradition and progress of the British Empire, especially in wartime, and when the sacrifice for the country had to be reinforced through a strong sense of belonging.

Another frequent way to represent the dense metropolis, is through long camera shots that portray working-class neighborhoods located in the inner part of the city. These representations are recurrent in films where the hero of the story inhabits these spaces. American films such as *Wild Boys of the Road*, *Boys of Street*, *Dead End*, *Boys Town*, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, *One Third of the Nation*, and *Going My Way*, portray the metropolis through dense streets with poor tenement buildings. American documentaries also include visual depictions of poor neighborhoods and tenement buildings to portray the process of industrial growth, the housing deficit, and the bad conditions of slums. On the other hand, these documentaries show the solution for these problems through new housing developments. Slums are shown in American documentaries such as *The City*, *A Place to Live*, and *For the Living* (see Figure 27 to illustrate the representation of slums in both American fiction films and documentaries).



Figure 27. The Representation of Slums in American Films

Poor neighborhoods of industrial cities are also portrayed in British films, such as *The Stars Look Down*, *Love in a Dole*, *The Common Touch*, *Odd Man Out*, *The Blue Lamp*, and *The Card*. From the mid-1950s, real locations of industrial cities were linked with realist stories about working-class characters, as I explain later. Films such as *Room at the Top*, *Violent Playground*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *A Taste of Honey*, and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, are films where the city space is used not only as a context for the story, but a place where the characters walk and move within (see Figure 28).



The Stars Look Down, 1939



Love in a Dole, 1941



The Common Touch, 1941



Odd Man Out, 1947



The Blue Lamp, 1950



The Card, 1952



Violent Playground, 1958



Room at the Top, 1958



Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 1960



A Taste of Honey, 1961



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962

Figure 28. The Representation of Slums in British Fiction Films

Like American documentaries, British documentaries portray the dense metropolis through the dichotomy between the industrial, overcrowded, and unhealthy city, represented

by the slums, and the solution for the problems represented by healthy, green and communitarian new developments. Documentaries such as *Housing Problems*, *The Great Crusade*, *The Development of the English Town*, *New Town for Old*, *Proud City*, and *The Way We Live*, portray metropolitan slums (see Figure 29).



Housing Problems, 1935



The Great Crusade, 1937



Development of the English Town, 1942



New Town for Old, 1942



Proud City, 1945



The Way We Live, 1946

Figure 29. The Representation of Slums in British Documentaries

British films include slums more often than American films. 17 British films portray poor zones of the inner city, and only 9 American films use this kind of representation. These numbers seem to reflect a greater British concern for social issues, especially considering that the number of examined American films triples the British ones. American slums, both fictional and real, portray a very precise housing model: the tenements of the poor are four or five-storey buildings with escape ladders, which occupy the entire block, without any patio

or greenery. On the other hand, British slums are lower; generally they are continuous brick rows of two-storeys with little patios, and without any greenery.

Both American and British documentaries portray the solution for the dense metropolis through two different urban models: on the one hand, the solution is presented by high-density multi-storyed buildings surrounded by parks or by large playgrounds, and on the other hand, the solution is portrayed by low-density neighborhoods in the form of new towns or garden suburbs. Both urban models represent the two urban paradigms developed in the first-half of the twentieth century: The Garden City and the Radiant City.

The American documentary *Better Housing*, celebrates the Housing Act and the Amortized Mortgage, as part of the New Deal Plan, which promoted the construction activity during the Great Depression. The film clearly promotes the housing ownership and emphasizes the functionality of interior spaces. *The City*, for example, promotes the “new towns.” It sets in Greenbelt, Maryland, which was the first federal experiment using Lewis Mumford’s model of a small, planned community. Greenbelt was settled in 1937 as a public cooperative community in the New Deal Era. The housing models that the film shows are mainly townhouses surrounded by parks and walkable spaces, with a clear separation between cars and pedestrians. The film *Problems of Housing* shows single-family houses, but it also includes modernist samples to illustrate new technologies of construction. *Homes for Veterans*, present the solution through both, suburban single-family houses and high-density multi-storyed buildings, while in *A Place to Live*, the solution is portrayed by townhouses surrounded with parks, and *For the Living*, lists the social housing projects developed by New York City Housing authorities. The film shows the project “The First House” built in

1935, which was the first social housing project developed in New York City; as well as, the film shows built projects, such as “Red-Hook” (1939), and “Vladeck Houses” (1940), among others. The Modernist style of the social housing apartments, in the form of superblocks, placed these buildings separated from surrounding streets and neighborhoods. They presented a distinctive image in a time that over three quarters of all American families lived in single-family houses.² This film also shows models of well-known projects located in Queens, such as “Queensbridge Houses” (1940). Queensbridge North Houses has thirteen, six-storey buildings with 1,540 apartments, and Queensbridge South Houses has thirteen, six-storey buildings with 1,602 apartments. Both developments were completed in March 15, 1940, and they were the larger social housing developments in the history of United States.³ *The Monsato House of the Future*, with a completely different architectonic style, shows a modernist and futuristic single-family house (see Figure 30 for the representation of urban models to solve the problems of the metropolis in American documentaries).

British documentaries also promote the same two urban models to solve the problems of the metropolis. *Housing Problems*, *Homes for Workers*, *New Town for Old*, and *Proud City*, emphasize modernist high-density buildings with large playgrounds, rather than the inclusion of parks. *The Development of the English Town*, and *The Way We Live*, mainly promote low-density solutions and Garden Cities (see Figure 31 for the representation of urban models to solve the problems of the metropolis in British documentaries).



Figure 30. Urban Models to Solve the Problems of the Metropolis in American Documentaries

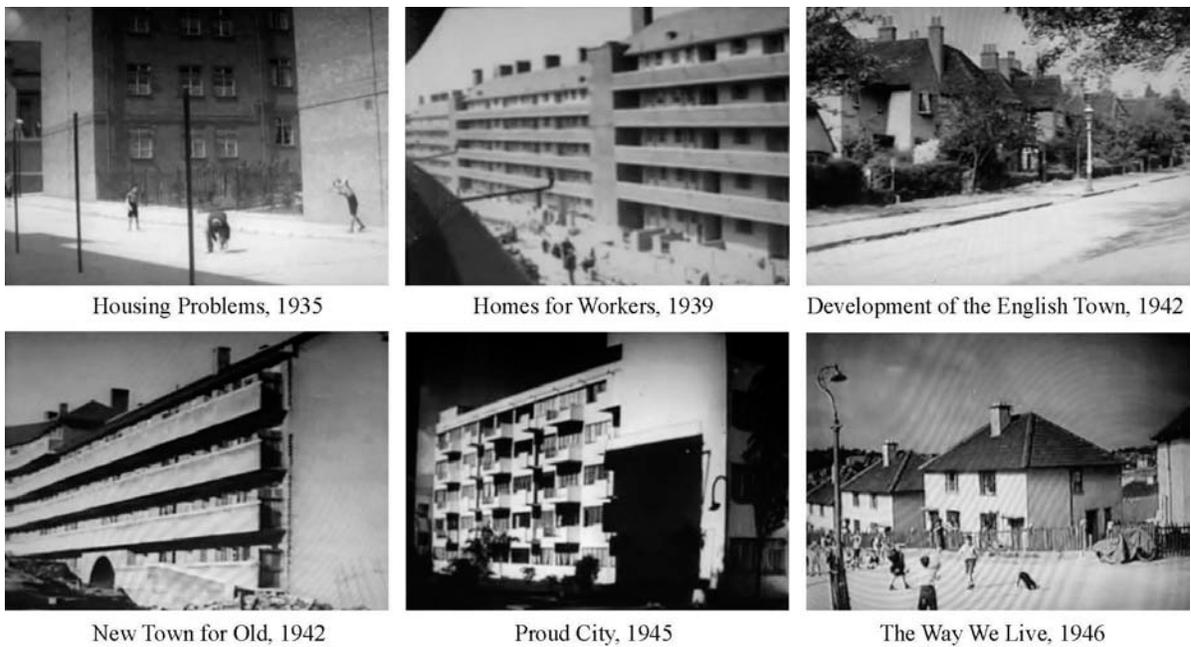


Figure 31. Urban Models to Solve the Problems of the Metropolis in British Documentaries

To emphasize the difference between the overcrowded slums and the healthy new projects, American documentaries *The City* and *Homes for Veterans*, and British documentaries *Homes for Workers*, *The Development of the English Town* and *New Town for Old*, use aerial shots to illustrate the advantages of the new urban concepts. *The City*, for example, shows aerial shots of Greenbelt towns, where we can appreciate the very low-density of the project, as well as, the closeness to forests, which is the objective of this sequence: show how this town is close to nature in opposition to the crowded city. *Homes for Veterans* includes also aerial views where we can see low-density settlements in form of townhouses. In the British *Homes for Workers*, the modernist high-density Gerard Gardens project illustrates the concept of the row building with an empty space at the center, conceived as a huge playground where children can play safely. *The Development of the English Town* includes aerial views of Letchworth Garden City, to illustrate how the design emphasizes the low-density and the closeness to the countryside. *New Town for Old* and *The Way We Live*, illustrate through aerial shots too, enormous sites filled with low-rise houses, apart from any commercial or civic center. These shots serve to illustrate the concept of dormitory town, which was strongly criticized by British architects and planners of the time, and showed as an example of what they should not do (see Figure 32 for the representation of aerial views to illustrate the solutions for city growth).

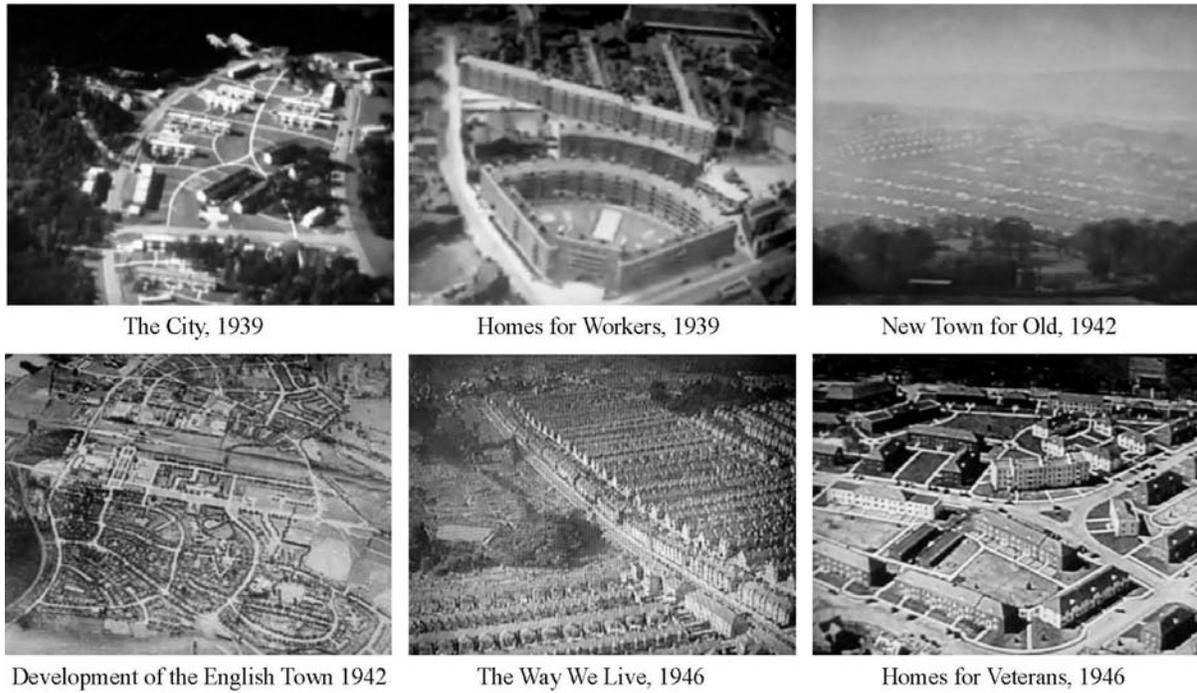
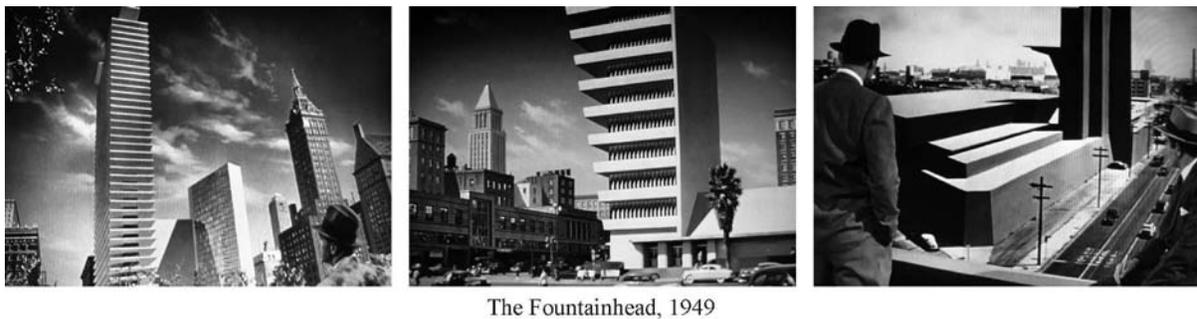


Figure 32. Aerial Views to Represent Solutions for the City's Growth

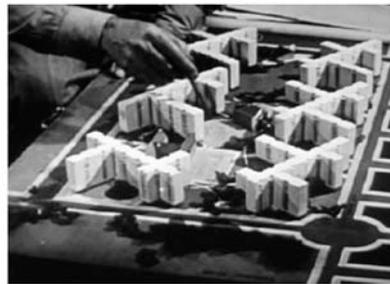
The dense metropolis is also portrayed through imagined cities. The American film *The Fountainhead* includes by montage techniques, drawings and models of modernist projects designed by the protagonist of the film, the architect Howard Roark (see Figure 33).



The Fountainhead, 1949

Figure 33. Imagined City in *The Fountainhead*

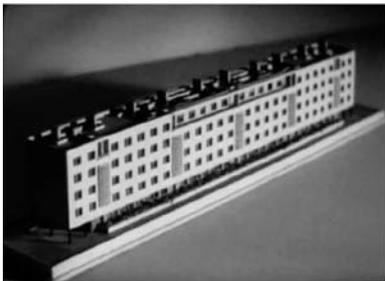
Both American and British documentaries also portray imagined cities by including models, drawings and schemas to illustrate and explain the new projects to solve the problems of the city. These projects often are shown by architects and planners, or by city authorities. American documentaries such as *Homes for Veterans* and *For the Living* show models of modernist projects developed in New York City in the form of high-density buildings surrounded by parks. British documentaries such as *Housing Problems* and *Proud City* show models of modernist high-density buildings, while in *The Way We Live*, architects explain the general plan, emphasizing low-density, single-family homes (see Figure 34).



Homes for Veterans, 1946



For the Living, 1949



Housing Problems, 1935



Proud City, 1945



The Way We Live, 1946

Figure 34. Imagined Cities in Documentaries

In *The Way We Live*, the architect Patrick Abercrombie is presented as an artist able to imagine the “before” and the “after” of Plymouth. We can see the architect walking down

the streets, while he is thinking how the city will look with his designs. Some of his thoughts are:

Plymouth needs pale colors to respond to the sunlight; buildings in limes tone and concrete. Flat and vertical masses to give balance to an interesting skyline; what is needed is a city to cheer people up.

Then we see by montage techniques, the transformation of the city landscape (see Figure 35).



Figure 35. Imagined City in *The Way We Live*

In both American and British documentaries, the criteria for space use in the new solutions, is through clear differentiation between zones for work versus zones for living. It demonstrates that urban ideas of the time strongly promoted the politics of dispersion, versus

the Mediterranean city, which promoted the mixed use, combining commercial use with residential use and more intimate spaces for social interaction.

The representation of the metropolis through long camera shots is also used in American films such as *Scarlet Street*, *The Lost Weekend*, *The Magic Town*, *The Street with No Name*, *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, *Dark City*, *Panic in the Streets*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *Love Nest*, *Kansas City Confidential*, *On the Waterfront*, *Down Three Dark Streets*, *The Naked Street*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *An Affair to Remember*, *Don't Eat the Daisies*, *The Apartment*, *Two for the Seesaw*, *Come Blow your Horn*, and *Any Wednesday*; and in British films such as *This Happy Breed*, *Brighton Rock*, *It Always Rains on Sunday*, *Odd Man Out*, *London Belongs to Me*, *Night and the City*, *The Blue Lamp*, *Look Back in Anger*, and *Darling*.

The American *Love Nest* and *An Affair to Remember* represent a romanticized version of Manhattan. In *Love Nest* we see a townhouses' neighborhood located in the inner part of the city, where neighbors enjoy a quiet and communitarian life. In *An Affair to Remember*, Manhattan is portrayed as a cosmopolitan, but at the same time, pleasant place to enjoy public space. These films are the only American films from the examined sample, which portray the metropolis as a pleasant place to live, where romantic stories are visually set in urban spaces (see Figure 36).



Love Nest, 1951



An Affair to Remember, 1957

Figure 36. Romanticized New York in *Love Nest* and *An Affair to Remember*

American films such as *The Magic Town*, *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, *Father's Little Dividend* and *Don't Eat the Daisies* portray New York as a place to work, but not as a place to raise a family. The families of *Mr. Blandings* and *Don't Eat the Daisies* live in Manhattan's apartments, but both move to single-family houses located in the suburbs. In *Father's Little Dividend*, the recently married couple lives in a downtown apartment, but when she is pregnant, the parents in love decide they need to move to a more appropriate environment. The ideology of these films does not condemn the metropolis per se, but criticizes its anonymous condition, and strongly promotes the suburban ideal as the only way to find identity and preserve moral values. In *The Magic Town*, the protagonist realizes that the metropolis cannot offer the communitarian values of small towns, and opts to build his future in a traditional small community. Films such as *The Apartment*, *Pillow Talk*, *Two for the Seesaw*, *Come Blow your Horn*, *Who Has Been Sleeping in My Bed*, *Sex and the Single*

Girl, and *Any Wednesday*, portray the metropolis and the apartments as places for extramarital relationships, or at least, for people unable to establish lasting relationships. (The stigmatization of the apartment will be discussed in the second section of this Chapter)

The link between metropolis with apartments, and suburbs with single-family houses, is evident in American films. From the sample of examined films, *Love Nest* is the only one that portrays the townhouse as a model house for the metropolis. All others films, present the apartment as the only possible option to inhabit the big city, including the tenement buildings of slums (see Figure 37 to illustrate the representation of apartments' exteriors in American films).



Dead End, 1937



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



One Third of the Nation, 1939



Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House, 1948



Don't Eat the Daisies, 1960

Figure 37. The Representation of Apartments in New York City

American films such as *Scarlet Street*, *The Lost Weekend*, *The Street with No Name*, *Dark City*, *Panic in the Streets*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *Kansas City Confidential*, *On the Waterfront*, *Down Three Dark Streets*, *The Naked Street*, and *Sweet Smell of Success*; as well as, *Wild Boys of the Road*, *Boy of the Streets*, *Dead End*, *Boys Town*, and *Angels with Dirty Faces*; strongly criminalize the metropolis. In these films the home, if it is located in the big city, cannot remedy the bad influence of the street. The metropolis represents a dangerous, crowded and impersonal modernity, which its spaces refuse to support traditional moral values, any establishment of family life; and by contrast, spaces promote a moral and ethical ambiguity, where everyday people may gradually become criminals. The representation of this ideology is frequently portrayed by isolated spaces of industrial zones, empty park lots, abandoned warehouses, docks and alleys; spaces that serve as scenario for persecutions, shootings, killings, or to materialize dealings between gangsters. The frequent inclusion of dark streets, where the illumination is provided by street lights, car lights, and neon lights when the sequence is placed in downtown, emphasizes this sense of anonymity and loneliness (see Figure 38 for the representation of the criminal city in American films).

With similar depictions, British films such as *Brighton Rock*, *Odd Man Out*, *The Blue Lamp*, and *Night and the City*, represent a dangerous city where criminals are always running, looking for a refuge in a place that seems cannot offer any sense of belonging (see Figure 39 for the representation of dangerous cities in British films).



Scarlet Street, 1945



The Lost Weekend, 1945



Dark City, 1950



Panic in the Streets, 1950



The Asphalt Jungle, 1950



Where the Sidewalk Ends, 1950



The Naked Street, 1954



On the Waterfront, 1954



Sweet Smell of Success, 1957

Figure 38. The Criminalization of the City in American Films



Brighton Rock, 1947



Odd Man Out, 1947



Nigh and the City, 1950

Figure 39. Dangerous Cities in British Films

In contrast to the metropolis, the other urban model shown by American films is the small town, which is explicitly portrayed in films such as *Our Town*, *Kings Row*, *Hail the Conquering Hero*, *Meet me in Saint Louis*, *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Stranger*, *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, *The Magic Town*, *All That Heaven Allows*, and *Return to Payton Place*. The suburb is explicitly represented in films such *Father's Little Dividend*, *Come Blow your Horn*, and *Send Me No Flowers*. All these films portray small towns and suburbs as pleasant places to live, raise a family and participate in communitarian activities. In these films, public spaces such as the school, the church, the social club and Main Street are portrayed as places of identity and memory, which strongly contribute to develop face-to-face interactions (see Figure 40 for the representation of small towns in American films).



Our Town, 1940



Meet me in St. Louis, 1944



The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 1944



It's a Wonderful Life, 1946



Love Laughs at Andy Hardy, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947

Figure 40. Small Towns in American Films

All American films that represent small towns and suburbs portray the single-family home as the unique housing model to live in. Other films that do not explicitly show on-screen small towns, such as *Dark Victory*, *The Women*, *The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer*, *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, and *Imitation of Life*, also promote the single-family house as the most desirable lifestyle for middle-class families. In this sense, the single-family house is the prevalent model shown on screen, and houses are always portrayed by traditional architectonic styles, with the predominance of colonial style. From the sample of American fiction films, there are not modernist houses, with the exception of *The Fountainhead*, where modernist designs are not real settings, but drawings made by the protagonist. A sort of modernism is used in the decoration of few departments, while houses decorations are always traditional, as I will discuss in the second section of this chapter. One of the findings of this study reveals that modernism was used to portray places to work, but not to live, demonstrating a strong conservatism, as will explained later (see Figure 41 for the representation of single-family houses in American films).

Unlike American films, in British films, the middle-class family is not portrayed by small towns and single-family houses, but by neighborhoods with townhouses located in residential zones of the city or in traditional suburbs (see Figure 42 for the representation of neighborhoods in British films).



Dark Victory, 1939



Our Town, 1940



Kings Row, 1942



Meet Me in St. Louis, 1944



Hail the Conquering Hero, 1944



It's a Wonderful Life, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer, 1947



Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House, 1948



Father's Little Dividend, 1951



All that Heaven Allows, 1955



Imitation of Life, 1959

Figure 41. Single-Family Houses in American Films



Million Like Us, 1943



The Demi Paradise, 1943



This Happy Breed, 1944



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947



London Belongs to Me, 1948



Night and the City, 1950



Room at the Top, 1958



Look Back in Anger, 1959



Darling, 1965

Figure 42. British Neighborhoods

Films such as *Million Like Us*, *The Demi Paradise*, and *This Happy Breed*, portray traditional British suburbs; while *It Always Rains on Sunday* represent a traditional Londoner residential neighborhood of row houses. *Night and the City* also portrays traditional Londoner neighborhoods; while in films such as *Room at the Top* and *Look Back the Anger*, the working-class protagonist lives in a rented room at the top of a traditional house, which now is used by different families. This glorious past and actual decadency of houses located in the inner city, is also portrayed in the film *London Belongs to Me*.

The film *Violent Playground* portrays a very different housing model. From the examined British fiction films, it is the only one that shows a modernist building to illustrate the life of its community. The story takes place in the Liverpool's modernist project "Gerard Gardens," which was one of Britain's first large community social housing initiatives to replace slum housing. Built in 1935, this building was largely promoted by British documentaries of the time.

The film *Darling* shows stereotypes of lifestyle according to housing models. For example, Robert, the television journalist lives with his wife and children in a suburban single-family house, but when he begins an affair with Diana and leaves his family, they move to a downtown apartment. The suburban model is also used to represent the house of Diana's parents.

Some conclusions we can venture after analyzing the representation of urban models and model houses in the examined films:

The prevalence of individual-family houses over apartment buildings in American films, illustrates that the metropolis, which is the predominant representation of the city in these films, is portrayed as a place to work more than a place to live, except for those that cannot afford an individual house, or for suspected people who do not fit with the lifestyle of small communities, as I discuss in the next section of this Chapter.

In contrast to American films, British fiction films seem to represent the metropolis as a place to work and live, and the townhouse model is the predominant model for the middle-class family. The individual-family house is only suggested in few British films, and it seems to be an American hope, rather than a British one.

The misrepresentation of modernist architectonic style for housing, in both American and British fiction films, illustrates that governmental efforts to promote the modernist housing solutions, was an effort that did not find greater echo in the commercial film industry.

CITY FILMS, DISCOURSES AND GENRES

From a theoretical approach, this project suggests that from the same episteme, not only different discourses circulate to delimit a possible knowledge, but diverse genres, which distribute these discourses and support the episteme, may be created, they may evolve and eventually they may disappear, or at least, find another medium to circulate. Under this approach, the study of genres in this project does not aim to define a “scientific” theory to organize the knowledge; this research intends to demonstrate that different genres used particular rhetorical practices and film techniques to communicate discourses about the city, and this discourses worked as taken-for-granted assumptions about spatial values.

This section will explore from a genealogical approach, on the one hand, the emergence of certain body of films and their connections between spaces and criminality, poverty, love, family, and identity; in terms of characters, plots, and spatial features, as well as, urban models and housing models that forms the assemblages that allow the discourse of the city.

Ferdinand Toennies’ definition of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, which reflects the great division between folk and urban society, serves to differentiate the intimate relationships of family and community, from the impersonal alliances of the modern metropolis. This dichotomy serves also to illustrate how American and British films represent urban spaces between the 1930s and 1960s.

Metropolitan spaces are mainly portrayed as places without identity, which refuse to support traditional moral values, and any establishment of family life. For this reason, the representation of domestic spaces that portray middle-class families is rare in these films. By

contrast, domestic spaces of apartments serve to represent poor people, youthful singles, easy women and terminal bachelors.

This study identifies five main bodies of films that portray the metropolitan space:

- (1) Social dramas that link dense urban space with poverty and juvenile delinquency, which are common in America during the 1930s;
- (2) Crime films that link the metropolis with criminality, portrayed by American and British films during the 1940s and 1950s;
- (3) Documentaries that condemn the metropolitan slums and propose new solutions, based on well-planned cities, portrayed by American and British films during the 1930s and 1940s;
- (4) Dramas that link industrial cities with poverty and working-class suffering, portrayed by British films at the end of the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s, and later, with a more realistic treatment, British dramas at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s; and
- (5) Romantic comedies that link the metropolis with individualist purposes and/or sexual temptations, which were common in America during the 1950s and 1960s.

On the other hand, small communities are represented as the most desirable form of living, with spaces that stimulate face-to-face interactions, family relationships and significant urban milestones that generate places of memory and identity. This discourse is portrayed by films that belong to genres such as:

- (1) Family dramas, which represent ordinary families as the main social nucleus and the foundation of any healthy society, portrayed by American and British films of the 1940s;
- (2) Romantic comedies, which revolve around one or more couples and their moments of happiness interspersed with problems and difficult times, portrayed mainly by American films of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s; and
- (3) (also included in) Documentaries, which represent towns and suburbs of low-density or modernistic projects in the form of high-density apartments to solve the problems of city growth. These films narrate stories about the new life conditions of former slum dwellers.

This section, dedicated to the discourse analysis, is divided in three main parts: The first part analyzes the discourse of the metropolis, its housing models and domestic spaces related with these models. The second part analyzes the discourse of small communities, as well as, its housing models and domestic spaces, and the third part, analyzes how the discourse of nature interact with both, the metropolis and small communities.

PART 1: THE DISCOURSE OF THE METROPOLIS IN FILMS

Juvenile Delinquency, Dead Bodies, Poverty, and Non-Spaces

During the 1930s, social dramas about kids emerged in American films. From the sample examined in this study, films such as *Wild Boys of the Road*, *Boy of the Streets*, *Dead End*, *Boys Town*, *Angels with Dirty Faces* and *One Third of a Nation*, belong to this categorization. In these films, the home is located in a dense and poor zone of the metropolis, and cannot remedy the bad influence of the street over the boys. As James Clapp notes, the theme of the dangers of urban life for young boys, because the city exposed them to unsavory characters, temptations, and influences, was a prominent theme through the 1930s; city boys were portrayed as “basically good kids,” who could be led astray by bad role models.⁴

The ideological approach of these films does not see the State playing an active role in the future of the boys; their future depends on the generosity of philanthropists, the dedication of priests, and the good advice of a sympathetic judge. The way to reintegrate the boys into society is presented through disciplinary institutions such as reformatories, the jail, the military, or the model town headed by Father Flanagan. In these films, the metropolis does not offer options for a safe and quiet life; even the rich, which live in a luxurious building in the film *Dead End*, are exposed to the dangers of the big city.

Britain also developed films that portray troubled youth; in the second-half of the 1940s, the film *Odd Man Out* is about a gang who belongs to the IRA; they become idols and models for the kids of the streets, who dream to be like them. British films such as *Violent Playground* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* represent an excluded working-

class youth, who grew up in the industrial city. Their dissatisfaction is translated into a rebellious and defiant attitude, which leads them to commit criminal acts.

The common characteristics shared by these films, both American and British, is that the metropolis together with poverty, seem to be the reason why young people become engage in criminality. All these films present on the one hand, the criminalization of the metropolis, and on the other hand, pastoral power as a way to salve individuals and transform them into good citizens.

The criminalization of the city is also portrayed in American films such as *Scarlet Street*, *The Street with No Name*, *Dark City*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Panic in the Streets*, *Down Three Dark Streets*, *On the Waterfront*, *The Naked Street*, and *Sweet Smell of Success*; and in British films such as *Odd Man Out*, *Brighton Rock*, *Night and the City*, and *The Blue Lamp*. All these films can be categorized as crime films, as well as films where the city space is strongly linked with criminality, and the police force is the disciplinary institution responsible for maintaining the order and protect the good citizens from the dangerous criminals.

Many commentators find clear associations between films that use the city as a main backdrop and certain recurrent themes, characters, and pro-filmic features. Vivian Sobchack, for example, argues that there is a type of Hollywood film obsessed with the dark city, which represents a crowded and impersonal modernity with spaces that invite casual and impermanent relationships. These spaces refuse to support traditional moral values, any establishment of family life, and by opposition, emphasize types of spaces such as the nightclub, the bar, the hotel room, the roadside cafe, the bus and train station, and the

wayside motel.⁵ In relation with the themes, Larry Ford argues that films that portray the metropolis have recurrent crime plots, and usually feature a psychological drama in which normal people are drowning ever deeper into a very personal, isolating nightmare.⁶ In the cities of crime films, there is a moral and ethical ambiguity in the sense that everyday people may gradually become criminals.⁷ Baron Palmer points out that crime films often trace the borders “not only between modes of living, but also between modes of experience, particularly the (dis) connection between dreaming (along with other alternative states like amnesia) and ordinary consciousness.”⁸ Edward Dimendberg, citing Georg Simmel, argues, “the modern city entails learning to ignore other people and developing a calculated indifference to the bodies with which one shares public transportation and the street.”⁹

From a formal and stylistic approach, these films are usually filmed at night, or at least they include many sequences at night. They are in black and white, with strong contrast, and streetlights, car lights, and neon lights of street signboards provide the illumination. These films include sequences in poor neighborhoods or working-class neighborhoods located in the inner part of the metropolis, or in industrial zones. Many sequences show dark and empty streets, especially in American films. Besides these streets, the common sets are empty and abandoned warehouses, docks and alleys, empty spaces that serve as scenario for diverse kinds of crimes. In terms of characters, especially in the case of American films between the 1930s and 1950s, the “normal,” the happy, the regular middle-class, the honest, the white, the productive individual, seem to be framed by recurrent associations with small communities. This kind of character probably works in the big city, but he lives in a single-family house with traditional architectonic style. His house is located in low-density

neighborhoods, which are also surrounded by social-communitarian institutions, religious institutions, walkable spaces, and closeness to nature, as I discuss in the next part of this Chapter. In contrast, the “abnormal,” the poor, the dishonest, the adulterous, the immigrant, the unhappy, the alcoholic, and especially the criminal, is framed by recurrent associations with the metropolis, night settings, departments, slums, bars, taxis, and so on. This dichotomy between the normal and the abnormal is also shown in some of the films examined in this study, as I explain later.

Issues such as history and identity, public and private, transit and permanence, and stability and dispersion, are recurring themes in films that speak about the city.

The American 1930s films about kids of the slums can be seen as reflecting an era of major crisis caused by the Great Depression, but may also be analyzed as the expression of previous discourses, as we discussed in Chapter 2, which before the consolidation of the cinema as a mass medium, were distributed by other mediums available at the time.

For example, Josiah Strong declared in 1885 that in the city was traceable every danger that threatened American democracy- “poverty and crime, socialism and corruption, immigration and Catholicism.”¹⁰ In the same year, Alan Forman wrote in *The American Magazine*, “A seething mass of humanity, so ignorant, so vicious, and so depraved that they hardly seem to belong to our species.”¹¹ In 1897, the *American Journal of Sociology* was forced to concede, “large cities are great centers of social corruption and degeneration.”¹² The Tenement House Commission of 1894 estimated that nearly three-in-five of the city’s population lived in tenement houses, “so grossly overbuilt” that on average nearly “four-fifths of the ground was covered in buildings.”¹³ The Tenement House Commission of 1900

confirmed the evils of tenement house living in America. According to R. H. Platt, in the United States of the early twentieth century, the lowest stratum of the labor force was assumed to be composed of recently arrived immigrants. The highest-ever annual level of immigration was recorded in 1907, when 2.3 million foreigners arrived.¹⁴ During 1910, 13.3 million foreign-born persons were living in the United States, comprising one-seventh of the nation's total population.¹⁵ In this time, the term slum expressed the presumed causal links between social isolation, adverse environment, casual labor and deviant behavior. Together these factors expressed the relationships between slums and poverty.¹⁶ By clearing slums or convincing property owners to improve the housing in slums, reformers hoped to create a better environment that would improve the safety, the health and the morals of the poor who inhabited these settlements.¹⁷

From the end of the nineteenth century a new racism emerged; biopolitics articulated a convincing and recurrent discourse, which made connections between hygienic conditions of dwellings with degeneration, criminality, deviant behavior, etc. This new adversary of overcrowding and congestion had to be destroyed, because it represented the risk to propagate and multiply its aberrant effects. Examples of this dominant discourse are the posters published in 1936 by the City of New York to promote Public Housing Developments (see Figure 43).



Figure 43. Posters of New York City, 1936

From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington

As Colin Mc Arthur argues, an important distinction may have to be made between literary depictions of the city and cinematic discourse.¹⁸ The iconic capacity of film images, means that what is placed in front of the camera has now a clear and recognizable image. The depiction of cities in films through actions, spaces and characters, serves to make analogies between the city we inhabit and the city we see on screen.

In American films *Boy of the Streets*, *Dead End*, *Boys Town* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*, the action takes place in the street, and the interior spaces of the apartments, where the boys supposedly live, are shown only in brief sequences. These films link urban poverty with juvenile delinquency, and reform school with adult criminal behavior. The boys of these films do not attend school, and their families are dysfunctional. In *Boy of the Street*, we know that the sixteen-year-old Chuck Brennan lives with his parents, but in *Boys Town* the kids in Father Flanagan's charge are orphans that simply lived in the slums. In *Angels with Dirty*

Faces, the parents of Rocky and Jerry never appear in the film, and in *Dead End*, Tommy lives with his only sister Drina, who dreams to live in the countryside.

The 1933 film *Wild Boys of the Road*, is about three kids during the Great Depression, who leave their towns looking for jobs in the metropolis. When finally they arrive to New York City, they are involved in a robbery attempt, which was planned by unscrupulous city dwellers that used them. In *Boy of the Street*, Chuck Brennan is the leader of a gang in a slum of New York. Chuck starts to work for a gambler, who is trying to shake down establishments in Chuck's neighborhood. Chuck tries to prevent the gambler from shooting the cop, and both, he and cop are shot. In the hospital, Chuck realizes that the gambler had used him and decides to collaborate with the police.

In both films, the metropolis is represented as a place, where adult criminals involve vulnerable kids in their illicit acts. In *Dead End* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*, adult criminals come back to their neighborhoods and become a bad influence for the vulnerable kids.

As a way to portray the negative environment of the city space, films such as *Boy of the Street*, *Dead End*, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, and *One Third of the Nation*, show the kids' neighborhoods at the opening sequences of the films, and these depictions include recurrent pro-filmic features.

In *Boy of the Street*, the film opens with a high-angle camera that shows the street and its tenement buildings. Streets are narrow and old three-storey buildings, full with clotheslines and escape ladders, enclose the street space. The activity is dense, with adults, children, and food vendors. We see people looking through open windows of precarious apartments. The street is the place where the boys play, interact, fight and find problems. The

film *Dead Ends* opens with an aerial view of New York City, where we can read the following text:

Every street in New York ends in the river. For many years the dirty banks of the East River were lined with the tenements of the poor. Then the rich, discovering that the river traffic was picturesque, moved their houses eastward. And now the terraces of these great apartment houses look down into the windows of the tenement poor.

The camera moves down to the street, showing windows, escape ladders and clotheslines, and later, a luxurious building just next door to the buildings of the poor. This contrast between rich and poor people will be one of the film's themes, and the reason because Tommy will be confined to a reform school, after he stole the watch from a rich boy. A very similar treatment is presented at the opening of the film *Angels with Dirty Faces*. In this film the street and the buildings are particularly full with clotheslines, and kiosks of food and street vendors, emphasizing the idea that slums are overcrowded and unhealthy places. The camera moves around with a high-angle to show the activity of the place; then it downs and stops in front of an escape ladder, where two boys are chatting. These boys, Rocky and Jerry, later are involved in problems, and Rocky is captured by the police and goes to jail.

This film presents only two, diametrically opposed ways to solve the future of these boys: Jerry, who does not go to jail, becomes a priest, and works helping boys of the street. Rocky however, accumulates convictions and becomes a famous criminal. This clear dichotomy between the wrong and the right, and the consequences that imply to take the wrong way, is strongly portrayed in these American films. The film *One Third of a Nation*,

set in the slums of New York, opens with shots of kids playing in the streets; the action moves to an old tenement building, where a fire starts. Many people die in the fire; and the child Joey, falls from an escape ladder, suffering severe injuries (see Figure 44 for the representation of the city space in opening sequences).



Boy of the Streets, 1937



Dead End, 1937



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



One Third of the Nation, 1939

Figure 44. Slum's Depiction in American Films of the 1930s

In *Dead End*, *Boy of the Street*, and *One Third of the Nation*, the figure of the policeman is part of the landscape of the street. All three films show a cop surrounding the neighborhood at the first sequences; his attitude is friendly but watchful, telling us that there is always a disciplinary institution that watches over us, and crime cannot be committed without consequences (see Figure 45).



Boy of the Streets, 1937



Dead End, 1937



One Third of the Nation, 1939

Figure 45. Policemen and Slums

Boys Town presents a different opening. Father Flanagan accompanies a criminal who prepares to go to the electric chair. He tells Flanagan: “If I had only one friend at twelve, I wouldn't be here.” The priest decides to start a home for the boys of the street, who are shown as problematic, with no parents to take care them. In *Boys Town* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*, priests play an important role for helping boys. With a much more optimistic view, and with a clear religious approach, the American film *Going My Way* is about a priest who initiates a chorus with the children of a poor neighborhood. The boys are docile and quickly become an example for the community; but *Going My Way* is an exception from the films examined in this study.

A recurrent form to represent rebellious and troubled boys living in poor places is through shots of the boys fighting. In *Wild Boys of the Road*, the clashes between the police and the boys serve to portray them as rebels, able to confront authorities and institutions. In the British *Odd Man Out*, the boys of the working-class neighborhood, where Johnny McQueen is hidden, after killing a man, are shown as mocking the police, and fighting. In this film, these boys represent the past of Johnny and his gang, who someday will be involved in criminal acts, and like Johnny, they will have a fatal end. Sequences of boys’

fight scenes are also shown in *Boy of the Street*, *Dead End*, *Boys Town*, and *Angels with Dirty Faces* (see Figure 46).

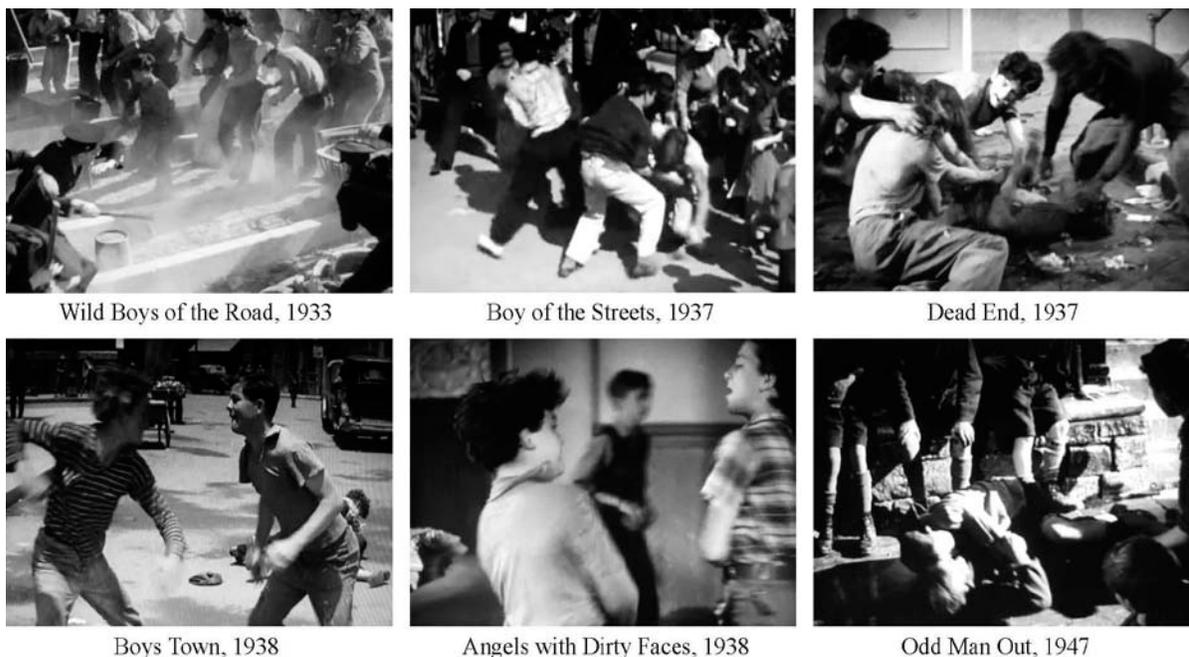


Figure 46 Boys of the Street Fighting

In the British film *Violent Playground*, detective Sergeant Jack Truman belongs to a small number of policemen rebranded “Juvenile Liaison Officers.” His responsibility is to familiarize with local youth crime, in order not only to combat the crime, but also to combat the causes of crime. This film represents the troubled youth through the character Johnny, a rebel teenager who enjoys rock and roll, but he is also a disturbed kid: he is not only portrayed as an arsonist, but as a violent kid. At the end of the film, Johnny threatens a school using a firearm, challenging any sort of authority.

The ideological approach of the British film *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* seems to be a quiet different. Here, the authority, the establishment and the

institution; portrayed by the juvenile reformatory, its warden and sports, which are often presented as a form of redemption and reintegration to society; is challenged by the young Colin Smith. This dystopian approach differs from the optimistic vision of American films, such as *Wild Boys of the Road*, *Boys Town*, *Boy of the Street*, and *One Third of the Nation*. In these films the pastoral power of the institution and the society can offer a solution for the boys, or at least, we can find an optimistic end.

In *Wild Boys of the Road*, the classical Hollywood happy ending gives Eddie the chance to come back home, after he is arrested with his two friends in New York City. The judge cannot get any information about their parents and the town where they live; however, after the judge listens to Eddie's speech about the reasons that moved them cross country, he promises to get a job for Eddie and dismisses the charges, only with the condition they go back to their homes and continue school. The trailer of this film was announced with the following headlines: "The living truth about 600,000 wild boys and innocent girls driven to vagrancy, crime, fates worse than death!" The film clearly illustrates the crisis of the Great Depression, but its discourse tells us that teenagers without the guidance and care of their parents are exposed to a tragic fate, ranging from losing a leg after being hit by a train, to being raped, to going to jail.

In *Boys Town*, and *Boy of the Street* disciplinary actions are successful. Father Flanagan, with more private donations, builds a city called Boys Town, which is built by their own boys, and where strict discipline, but at the same time, democratic practices, guide the operation of the place. In *Boy of the Street*, when Chuck realizes that the gambler used him, he decides to take the right way and collaborates with the police. After Chuck turns

seventeen, he gets into the Navy and starts a new life. In this film, his service to the country is the proof that the boy wishes to redeem him, and his sacrifice is viewed with pride by his parents and girlfriend. The soundtrack that accompanies this final scene is an optimistic military band, which fits the images of hundreds of troops embarking at the port of New York. The patriotic feeling is also an inspiration for the boys of *Boys Town*, which organize democratic elections within the community, in order to respect “all the different ways of thinking.” The systematic inclusion of the United States’ flag, flying in front of the building of Boys Town, represents this feeling. As Herbert Gans notes in his study of underlying values in American news, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, individualism, small town pastoralism, and moderatism, are the most recurrent values,¹⁹ and we can see all these values in these American films of the 1930s.

The small town pastoralism is clearly represented in *Boys Town*. Father Flanagan is looking for a site to build his town. He invites his friend David, the shop-owner, to take a drive through the countryside. They stop in front of a field that is for sale, and the priest comments: “lovely country; isn’t it?” We see a landscape of valleys and a beautiful sky; meanwhile we hear the sound of birds. “I want to buy it... just look at it, the children could have gardens, dormitories, gymnasiums, classrooms.... but, perhaps it’s only a dream; hundreds of children living a decent life.” Finally and thanks to the help of an influential newspaper’s owner and more private donations, Father Flanagan builds Boys Town, which is a huge garden with a central building, sports fields, and farm animals. Children live a healthy life, close to nature, but with discipline: They practice sports, smoking is prohibited, and the children are instructed in the ways of military training.

(See Figure 47 for the representation of pastoralism in *Boys Town*)



Boys Town, 1938

Figure 47. Small Town Pastoralism in *Boys Town*

The celebration of rural pastoralism and the condemnation of the city are also portrayed in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. In this film the city is linked with criminality, materialism, and consumerism, while nature is linked with liberation and love. Colin Smith is an 18-year-old, who lives in a working-class neighborhood in Lancashire. The rebel kid, without high expectations in life than to be a poorly-paid laborer, as his father, commits a robbery in a bakery, and he is sent to a juvenile reformatory. The institution's governor, who stresses physical activity as a means of rehabilitating youth, notes that Colin could be an outstanding long distance runner, and decides to train him for a forthcoming match against a prominent public school. During his lonely practice runs, where Colin is shown training in the field, running through forests and beautiful landscapes, he revises and remembers his past life. Nature works here as a trigger of conscience, as the instance of reflection and analysis, of deep thought. Through flashbacks, Colin recalls the details of his early life, memories about his dysfunctional family, which includes a father who had cancer and was bedridden for a long time, and a materialistic mother waiting for her husband to die

and collect a small amount of the insurance money (see Figure 48 for the illustration of the dichotomy between city and nature in this film).



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962

Figure 48. The Dichotomy Between City and Nature in the *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*

During the training across the countryside, Colin realizes that society is offering nothing to him. His flashbacks recall the cancer suffering of his father, the television set that his mother bought when they spent a day shopping after the father died, the problems with his mother's boyfriend, the bakery robbery, and his few moments of happiness with his girlfriend Audrey, when they went together to the coast for a weekend. Here, the city, and the specific city that Colin remembers, is portrayed as the anonymous, materialist and ugly industrial city, represented by narrow streets without greenery, old buildings without ornament, vacant lots, and industrial smokestacks; in contrast with Colin's few moments of

happiness, which are portrayed by the lovely couple framed by the immensity of the sea (see Figure 48 and 49).



The Lonliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962



The Lonliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962

Figure 49. Colin's Flashbacks in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*

The camera angles used to portray both, the city and nature are long angle shots to represent natural landscapes, and medium and close angle shots to represent the claustrophobic world of the city. This contrast of the frame's composition is clearly portrayed when the space switches within the flashbacks (from the city to the beach), and when the time switches from the past to the present time.

Although most crime films examined in this study portray urban landscapes, the American *The Asphalt Jungle* portrays at the ending sequences, the dichotomy between nasty urban space, which is linked with criminal life; and pleasant nature, linked with purity and

liberation. Here, the antihero Dix, after a life of crime, realizes that he wants to see for the last time the fields where he grew up. The film opens in the early morning with long shots of empty city streets, isolated concrete buildings, apparently vacant, and intricate electric lines for trolleys. Like many American films, pro-filmic spaces are the most desolate places of the city, and they never show any sign of greenery. In this sequence, the only sign of movement is a police car that patrols the area. Its radio reports “armed suspect, tall man, Caucasian, wearing a dark suit and soft hat.” Now we see Dix Handley, who enters into a cafe identified as serving “American Food-Home Cooking.” Later, in the sequence that takes place in the 4th Police Precinct, we realize that “Doc” Riedenschneider, described as one of the most dangerous criminals alive, is now in this city. He has a brilliant plan for a jewel robbery, and to carry out the plan, Doc enlists a number of criminals, including Dix. At first all goes well, but an explosion to break down a wall, activates the alarms and police arrive at the place earlier than expected. The rest of the gang is captured; Doc and Dix manage to escape, but they go in separate ways. The police finally capture Doc; and Dix, in desperate need of medical attention after he was shot, flees in his car with his girlfriend Doll. Dix drives to his beloved Kentucky homeland to fulfill his last obsession: his lost childhood dream, memories of the simple life at a horse farm. As Dix and Doll move along a road, we can see fields surrounded by white fences. Under the bright, sunny sky, Dix stops the car and staggers into a grass field, but he stumbles, collapses and dies on the plains of his home, surrounded by pleasant nature (see Figure 50).



The Asphalt Jungle, 1950



The Asphalt Jungle, 1950

Figure 50. The Dichotomy between City and Nature in *The Asphalt Jungle*

This final sequence may be read as having meaning related with identity, private life and permanence, everything that has to do with the notion of home. Dix wants to come back home, and home is not the corrupt city, but the beautiful countryside. City is then, the home of criminals, not the home of innocent childhood. This discourse is also the celebration of the pastoral rural and its liberating nature.

The film *One Third of the Nation* presents the responsible capitalism values, as well as, small town pastoralism. Peter Cortland, the rich owner of the burned building, helps Joey's sister Mary; takes the boy to the hospital and offers to pay the hospital bills. First, Peter does not realize he is the owner of the building, but when he notes the unsafe conditions of the place, he tries to think of a solution. Meanwhile, Joey leaves the hospital and the fire's traumatic experience, leads him to hallucinate about the building. Joey's

hallucinations include the sequence where the building is an animated organism, which talks to Joey and encourage him to destroy it. The boy starts another fire, but this time the place is completely destroyed and Joey dies. Peter realizes that he cannot wait for another death, and decides to sell the mortgage to the city and supervises the destruction and rebuilding of his tenement buildings. At the final part of the film, Peter declares to Mary's boyfriend: "The world is changing every day, in this time a man like you (a poor one) realizes that a man like me (a rich) are both human beings." The film far from promoting class struggle, emphasizes the philanthropy of the rich, and his generosity is finally helping the poor. We see documentary images of real demolitions, and the new buildings correspond to New York's first public housing project, called "First Houses." Through a montage technique, Joey's smiling face is reflected on the facades of the new buildings; at the same time we can hear Mary saying, "It's true Joey, it's really true, and there are trees and regular playgrounds for the kids, a handball court, and a pool." The final sequence, accompanied with optimistic music, shows Mary and Peter's faces mixed with documentary images of the pool, the gardens, and kids playing. Mary's voice repeats again, "Grass and trees, parks and playgrounds." Here the new buildings represent the pastoralism of small towns; they emphasize self-contained communities and green spaces as the way to solve the living conditions of the poor. From a historical approach, this film particularly presents the solutions for slum clearance that was discussed at this time. First Houses is the oldest public housing development in New York City, which was completed in 1936. The 1.23-acre has eight buildings of four and five stories, with 126 apartments. It is located between East 2nd

and East 3rd Streets, Avenue A and First Avenue on Manhattan's Lower East Side²⁰ (see Figure 51 and 52).



Figure 51. New Apartments in *One Third of the Nation*



Figure 52. "First Houses" first Public Housing Project in New York, 1935

Source: www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu

The American films *Dead End* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*, and the British *Odd Man Out*, present a more pessimistic view about the future of these boys. In these films, the protagonists are adult criminals, whose past was to be children of the streets, as the kids of their neighborhoods. These kids seem to go inevitably toward a tragic end. In these films, the criminals are apprehended by the police and they pay their sins with death. In *Dead End*,

Baby Face dies from a shot, in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, Rocky is sentenced to the electric chair, and in *Odd Man Out*, when Johnny McQueen and his girlfriend Kathleen, realize that the police are closing in, Kathleen shoots at the ground and forces the police to return fire, killing them both.

As a proof that the school reformatory did not work for Rocky, he accumulates sentences and spends part of his youth in prison. When Rocky is out of jail, he returns to his neighborhood, looking for a safe place to stay, while he can get back into his racketeering organization, which includes casinos, gambling, and scams. Rocky becomes the idol of the boys, meanwhile the priest Jerry is trying to take them away from bad influences. Jerry tries to convince Rocky to leave crime, but his attempts are in vain; Rocky is finally captured and sentenced to death. When Rocky is preparing to die, Jerry wants the boys of the neighborhood not to idolize Rocky, so he asks him to make a sacrifice: to die like a coward. “You asking me to pull an act, turn yellow, so those kids will think I’m no good... You’re asking too much. You want to help those kids, you got to think about some other way.” Despite Rocky’s words, before the execution, he screams for mercy, “I don’t want to die! Please. I don’t want to die!” we hear Rocky’s pleas, but we only see his shadow projected on the wall, suggesting that Rocky might be pretending to be a coward to reward his old friendship with Jerry. The boys of the neighborhood read the newspaper headline that announces, “Rocky Dies. Yellow Killer Coward at End,” and Jerry finally gets his objective. In *Dead End* “Baby Face” is a nationally known criminal of the most dangerous order, who after a plastic surgery comes back to his old neighborhood to see again his mother and old girlfriend. His mother wants nothing to do with him and tells him she wishes he were dead;

and his old girlfriend is now a prostitute that is in the final stages of syphilis. Drina, who is trying to take away her younger brother Tommy, from turning into a criminal and from the bad influences of Baby Face, has to accept when Tommy is caught; that he will go to the reformatory school and possibly will emerge as a hardened criminal.

In *Old Man Out*, Johnny McQueen is an IRA leader in 1940s Belfast, Ireland. Johnny leaves the bedroom that has been his hideout since he came out of jail six months before, because he and his gang decide to commit a robbery. The story revolves around Johnny fleeing police who search every corner of the city, after he accidentally kills a man during the robbery.

In *Angels with Dirty Faces*, *Dead End* and *Odd Man Out*, the characters Rocky, Baby Face and Johnny McQueen represent the future of the boys of the street, which apparently have no option to change their destiny. In *Boys Town*, Whitey Marsh is represented as a potential criminal, but Father Flanagan finally shows Whitey that his future can be different (see figure 53 for the representation of Baby Face, Rocky and Johnny).



Dead End, 1937



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



Odd Man Out, 1947

Figure 53. Future Boys of the Street

In all these films, poverty and working-class neighborhoods located in the inner metropolis, seem to meet all the conditions that help the spread of crime, or at least, the development of criminal behavior.

Baby Face, Rocky and Johnny's persecutions, are represented in a similar way. These sequences are filmed at night, with high contrast of shadows, and the criminals of the American films move down through buildings rooves and escape ladders, while in *Odd Man Out*, the streets of Belfast are empty, cold and dark, slightly illuminated by street lamps, where relentless rain eventually gives way to snow. In these night shots, the central character was accentuated by a heavy shadow; the space gives a greater weight than the actor, telling us that there is nothing the protagonist can do. The city will outlast and negate even his best efforts, anticipating his fatal end. The use of oblique and vertical lines rather than horizontal lines is other aspect of the composition's frame in these sequences. Oblique lines tend to splinter the screen, and this effect contributes to produce a restless and unstable atmosphere (see Figure 54).

The editing technique of American montage, using newspaper headlines that dissolve one after the other, is used in *Wild Boys of the Road* and in *Angels with Dirty Faces*. In *Wild Boys of the Road* it serves to inform that the boys and their clashes with the police is a phenomenon of public interest, is news in the newspapers, so it is important. In *Angels with Dirty Faces* the headlines serve to inform the troubles that Rocky is involved, and also serves to represent the passage of time with brief images. In *Dead End*, the boys of the street realize that Baby Face is dead, because the headlines announce it. In these three films the headlines

act as a proof of what is true. “If the newspaper says it, it’s because it is the true,” comments the boys in *Dead End* (see Figure 55).



Figure 54 Persecutions of Criminals in Crime Films

Newspapers’ headlines are also a recurrent pro-filmic element in traditional crime plot films. The American films *Scarlet Street* and *Naked Street*, as well as British films such as *Brighton Rock* and *The Blue Lamp*, include news headlines related with committed crimes. This link between the city and what is happening in the city, with a strong emphasis on

criminal acts, not only serves to support the plot; ideologically, it works to reinforce the criminalization of the city space (see Figure 56).



Wild boys of the Road, 1933



Dead End, 1937



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938



Angels with Dirty Faces, 1938

Figure 55. Headlines in Social Dramas about Kids during the 1930s

As John Tagg points out in his study about photographs and representation, photographs started to function as a means of record and source of evidence.²¹ Tagg argues that the power is not the power of the camera, but the power that the institutions give to the images as evidence of truth.²² He argues that urban concentrations became dangerous in the industrial city, with the necessity to incorporate new mechanisms of training, docility, social obedience, and moral supervision. Disciplinary institutions, such as the prison, generated a new kind of knowledge, which was preserved in a proliferating system of documentation.²³ The picture of the convict is more than a picture of a supposed criminal; the frame, the face seen in front and in profile becomes the portrait and the product of the disciplinary method. In the film *Angels with Dirty Faces*, such images are not only used to represent the passage of time, but they stigmatize, define, and objectify Rocky, mainly as a criminal.



The Asphalt Jungle, 1950



Down Three Dark Streets, 1954



Naked Street, 1955

Figure 58. Criminal's Photographs

American films such as *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Down Three Dark Streets*, and *Naked Street*, also use convicts photographs to portray not only the “the criminal” of the film, but his stigmatization by disciplinary institutions (see Figure 58).

This dichotomy between the “normal” and the “abnormal,” and the places each one inhabits, is portrayed in *Panic in the Streets*. Dr. Clinton Reed, a uniformed doctor who works for the U.S. Public Health Service of New Orleans, is enjoying a day off with his wife and son, but decides to inspect the body of a man called Kochak, killed by a gangster who left the body on the docks. We see Dr. Reed’s house portrayed as a traditional single-family house with porch and garden. In this film, criminality is also linked with immigration and illness; after careful examination, Dr. Reed realizes that Kochak had “pneumonic plague”. The experts determine that Kochak may be Armenian, Czech or mixed blood, and everyone who came into contact with the body has to be inoculated. After Reed convinces the police commissioner and other city officials, he and Captain Tom Warren, must find and inoculate the killers and their associates. The scenario of the search includes the waterfront, docks, the National Maritime Union, the slums where immigrants live, warehouses, city’s Greek restaurants with excess of food and music. This film firmly portrays the dichotomy between private space of decent people (Dr. Reed’s house), private spaces of immigrants (the slums), and public spaces of both: the city, represented as a threatening, dangerous, hybrid, and sick world (see Figure 59).



Panic in the Streets, 1950



Panic in the Streets, 1950

Figure 59. Dichotomy between Private Space and Public Space in *Panic in the Streets*

Most American crime films and British films of the 1950s and 1960s portray a city, where space use is strongly differentiated by zoning; residential zones are clearly separated from office zones and industrial zones. This strong separation between activities (in contrast to Mediterranean cities), creates office and industrial empty zones during the night, providing the best scenario for “criminals and suspicious individuals.” Similarly, the separation between workplace and home in big cities necessarily implies the need for expeditious transport systems, such as trains and subways. The elevated subway routes emerge from the heart of the city, breaking the urban pattern and producing desolate spaces under large structures, which provide shelter to the homeless and drug addicts, and allow criminals to hide. Edward Dimendberg points out the notions of “centripetal space,” in opposition to the dispersed

realm of “centrifugal space,” which may be portrayed as the world of highways, movement, and the replacement of metropolitan density and verticality by suburban sprawl.²⁴

These spaces are in Marc Auge’s words, “non-spaces.”²⁵ “If place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.”²⁶ Non-spaces do not identify people; they are not the residence, nor the neighborhood, neither the public square. They are not the school, neither the space for a historical monument. Non-spaces do not possess clear boundaries, and they are places where people are in permanent transit. Non-spaces are for example railways, highways and streets where their boundaries are simple limits without doors, windows or any architectonic construction that offer spaces to stop or be sheltered. Crime films use recurrent forms of urban non-spaces, such as unarticulated spaces, empty parking lots, discontinuous facades, bus stations, hotel rooms, and so on (see Figure 60).

Marc Auge notes that men create non-spaces; they are used by men, but by those men who are disconnected from their reciprocal relations and from their symbolic existence. These spaces are not conjugated, not in the past neither in the future, they are spaces without nostalgia or hope.²⁷

On the other hand, Kevin Lynch in his study about the image of the city²⁸ argues that for a city to possess an “image” it has to have clear limits, a coherent pattern, and identifiable spaces, which must be at the same time “explicative milestones.” In traditional and historical cities, these identifiable spaces were the street, the city wall, the market, and the piazza.



Scarlet Street, 1945



The Street with No Name, 1948



Panic in the Street, 1950



Dark City, 1950



The Asphalt Jungle, 1950



Where the Sidewalk Ends, 1950



On the Waterfront, 1954



Down Three Dark Streets, 1954



Naked Streets, 1955

Figure 60. Non-Spaces in American Films

Christian Norberg-Schultz notes that in the modern city, the new settlements do not anymore possess enclosure and density. “They usually consist of buildings freely placed within a park-like space. Streets and squares in the traditional sense are no longer found, and the general result is a scattered assembly of units.”²⁹

British films of the 1950s and 1960s, which aim to portray a more “realistic” city, include sequences where we can see non-spaces, in terms of Auge’s definition (see Figure 61).



The Blue Lamp, 1950



Violent Playground, 1958



Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 1960



A Taste of Honey, 1961



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962

Figure 61. Non-Spaces in British Films

For example, *The Blue Lamp* shows a desolate site, which serves as scenario for the escape of criminals. *Violent Playground* shows at the beginning and at the end of the film, the sites around the Gerard Gardens project. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, we see a townscape of isolated industrial buildings and precarious dwellings, as Arthur rides his bicycle from his home to the factory. In *A Taste of Honey*, Jo and Geoffrey are frequently framed in non-spaces, such as the disarticulated open space, where the boy with Down syndrome plays. In *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, we can see the

disarticulated city from the windows of the stolen car by Colin and his friend, when they drive through the streets.

While the city is portrayed as the home of criminal people, or at least, of people who are losing the control of their lives; the city is also the place where disciplinary institutions must do their work. American films, such as *The Street with No Name* and the *Naked City* are examples of how a disciplinary institution, in particular the FBI, works.

The disciplinary society and its mechanisms of control and prohibition are evident with laws such as the 18th Amendment, passed by Congress in 1917, went into affect in 1920, which prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages in America. Prohibition was expected to reduce the consumption of alcohol and thereby reduce crime and poverty, and improve the quality of life of its citizens. In fact, prohibition led to an explosive growth of crime. The Great Depression compounded the problem as some poor, and Americans resorted to crime as a way to provide food, clothing, and other necessities. The crime rate at the end of the 1920s nearly doubled from that of the pre-Prohibition period.³⁰ In May 1934, Congress approved an anti-crime package that included the Anti-Racketeering Act, which prohibited extortion through the mail or telephone; the Fugitive Felon Act, which prohibited suspected criminals from crossing state lines to escape prosecution; and the National Firearms Act, which gave the FBI the right to collect taxes on weapons, restrict weapons importation, and require firearms registration. By 1935 Roosevelt had signed seven new crime bills that provided the FBI with comprehensive crime-fighting powers.³¹

The Street with No Name opens with a semi-high camera angle that shows a huge room full of desks with clerks working there. We read the following text, “The motion picture you are about to see was adapted from the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, wherever possible it was photographed in the original locale and played by the actual F.B.I. personnel involved.” As Rebecca Prime points out, in the second-half of the 1940s, a small cycle of semi-documentary police dramas appear, their story-line drawn from police case work, using authentic documentary footage, and casting non-fiction actors.³² In the next sequence of *The Street with No Name* we see a typewriter, which writes...

The Street on which crime flourishes is the street extending across America. It is the street with no name. Organized *gangsterism* is once again returning. It is permitted to go unchecked three-out-of-every-four Americans will eventually become its victims. Wherever law and order break down there you will find public indifference. An alert and vigilant America will make for a secure America.

This statement is not only a warning, but also provides the solution: The FBI is a reliable institution, with well-trained members, but every citizen must be alert, because one is at permanent risk. As Prime argues, for the American social institutions, especially its legal organizations, the semi-documentaries can be seen to serve an affirmative, conservative function³³. *Los Angeles Times* suggested, “you still sleep all the easier of nights after viewing the feature and knowing more of this amazing system of protection.”³⁴

Another semi-documentary is the British *The Blue Lamp*, which was also dedicated to the Police Service. The film shows the daily activities of two London Bobbies, the veteran

George Dixon and rookie Andy Mitchell, who are presented as honest guardians of society, battling the crime committed by young criminals, who are finally captured thanks to an alliance of police and criminals. Here, the community comes together, abandoning its internal divisions in order to restore the social order.

Crime films not only portray a dark and dangerous city that needs the institutions of discipline and order, and where the characters are in transit without any option to establish lasting relationships; these films systematically include dead bodies, as the fatal consequence of criminality (see Figure 62).



The Street with No Name, 1948



Night and the City, 1950



Panic in the Streets, 1950



The Naked Street, 1955

Figure 62. Dead Bodies in the Metropolis

If dead bodies, dangerous people, the need of disciplinary institutions, and vulnerable victims form part of the landscape of the city, our personal representation of the real city can never be perceived completely different from those we see on screen. As Victor Burgins

argues, “the city of our actual experience is at the same time an actually existing physical environment, and a city in a novel, a film, photograph, in a comic strip, and so on.”³⁵

The discourse of the city portrayed through the body of the films discussed before, strongly links urban poverty with juvenile delinquency, and urban landscapes with criminality. These persistent discourses should be analyzed, not only in relation to the previous discourses presented in Chapter 2, which were distributed by different media and functioned as a sort of accumulation; but in relation to their immediate historical context, which provides the main themes of the films. However, the same discourses were portrayed by other genres that emerged in the same periods. The discourses of documentaries of the time condemn the metropolis too, but the films functioned as ways to convince and educate people; they not only show the problems of the industrial city, but also propose and formulate the solutions. One of the main arguments these films used, in order to support the new solutions for the city growth, was that the children deserve a better place to live.

The next section discusses the documentaries on urban issues developed during the 1930s and 1940s, analyzing how certain representations systematically used by this genre, became film icons, used by fiction films in later years.

Our Children Deserve a Better Place to Live

Two decades after the American kids' movies of the 1930s, the British film *Violent Playground*, set in the modernist Gerard Gardens housing project and portrays a sort of modern slum. Paradoxically, the same project was used by British documentaries during the second-half of the 1930s, as an example and a model of new housing, which supposedly was the solution for the slums (see Figure 63).

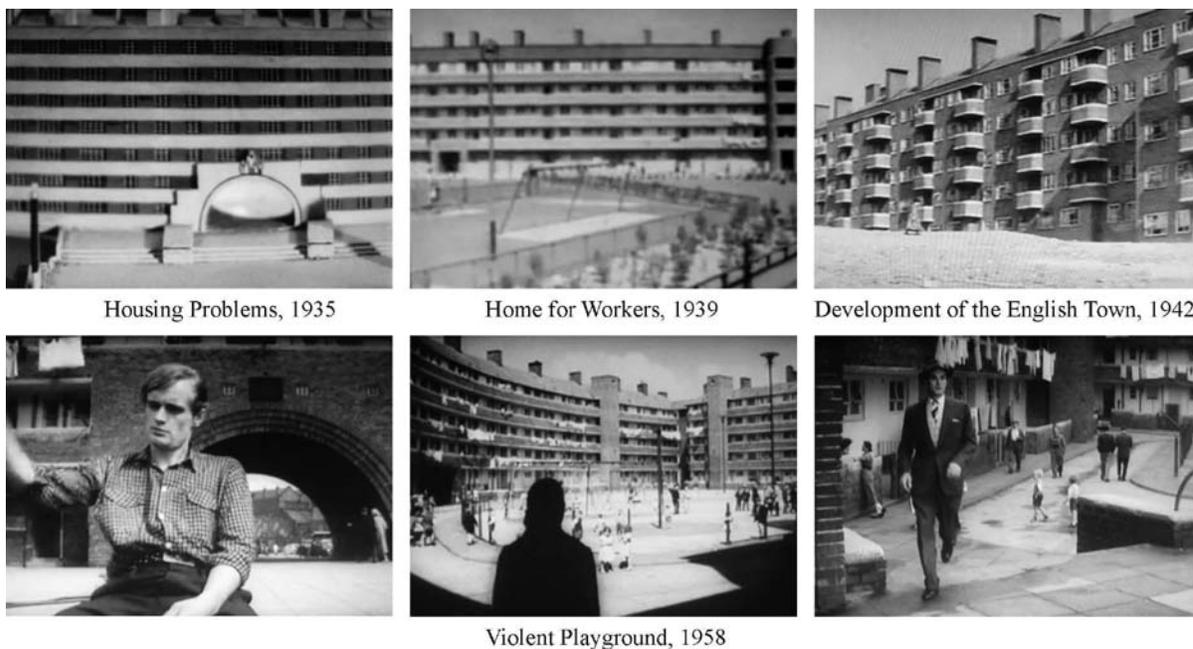


Figure 63. Gerard Gardens in Documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s and in the Film *Violent Playground*

This contradiction, produced only 20 years after the construction of Gerard Gardens, is only one example to illustrate how modernist architecture, in the form of large housing projects, was rarely promoted by the cinema industry in America and Britain between the 1930s and 1960s. The exception from the body of examined films is *One Third of the Nation*, as we discussed previously. In contrast, modernist architecture was strongly promoted by

British documentaries, and with less emphasis, by American documentaries. In both countries, the main argument was the concern about the future of the children. American and British documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s strongly condemn not the metropolis per se, but the slums of the metropolis. American documentaries such as *The City, A Place to Live*, and *For the Living*; and British documentaries such as *Housing Problems*, *The Great Crusade*, *Home for Workers*, *New Town for Old*, *The Development of the English Town*, *Proud City*, and *The Way We Live*; reiterate a very similar discourse: the condemnation of the overcrowded and unhealthy slums, and the promotion of new solutions, which were the result of good planning. For this reason, these documentaries were also the promotion of urban planners, as I discuss in the next section.

British documentaries, realized in the war period, constitute one of the clearest bodies of films that comment and promote urban models. The Scottish filmmaker John Grierson was credited with coining for the first time in film, the word “documentary,” when he wrote a review of Robert Flaherty’s film *Moana* (1926), published in the *New York Sun* on 8 February 1926.³⁶ After Grierson had spent three years in America, he came back to Britain in a time that British cinema was dominated by products of Hollywood. In 1926, only five percent of the films shown on British screen were British.³⁷ In 1927, the government introduced legislation to protect British producers, such as The Cinematograph Films Bill, which contained regulations to ensure that all cinemas showed an increasing proportion of national films.³⁸ In May 1926, the Dominions Office in London created a new department, the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), to promote “all the major researches across the world, which affects the production or preservation or transport of the British Empire’s food

supplies.” The broader purpose of the EMB was to inform public opinion about the Commonwealth and Empire, using all sorts of publicity media such as newspapers, posters, radio, exhibitions and films.³⁹ When Grierson returned to Britain in 1927, he believed that film, and documentary film in particular, could play a crucial role within society, by providing an effective medium of communication between the State and the public.⁴⁰ He was convinced on the possibilities of film media as a powerful form of education and persuasion, and was strongly interested to participate in the EMB. In 1928, he joined the Empire Marketing Board and organized its film unit. His first film, *Drifters* (1928) was received enthusiastically in Britain; the representation of the working-class life and experience as “heroic” was for Grierson a way leading to cultural and political reform. For the next 10 years, Grierson actively participated in documentary projects; first he was appointed to make publicity films for the EMB, and after its abolition in 1933, he became the Film Officer of the General Post Office Film Unit (GPO).⁴¹ Grierson founded the British documentary film movement with the creation of the EMB Film Unit, and by appointing figures such as Basil Wright, Arthur Elton, Edgar Ansley, Harry Watt and Paul Rotha. The movement sought sponsorship from government bodies and its style was characterized by the use of realistic images and formative edition.⁴²

The early production of the GPO film unit was confined to publicizing the Post Office services. These low-budget films were shot on location featuring “real” people doing their jobs. In the first films, the people who appeared were not speaking about themselves, but a narrator was speaking for them. The exception was *Six Thirty Collection*, where Harry Watt and Edgar Anstey tried to let the people participate in the voice-over narration. This

experiment opened new ways to the movement's approach.⁴³ A group of films that appeared during the mid-1930s introduced the direct location recording of speech, such as *Workers and Jobs*, commissioned by the GPO, and *Housing Problems*, commissioned by the British Commercial Gas Association. In 1936, Grierson established other documentary film units and coordinated a body called Film Centre. In 1938, he left Britain and became Officer of the National Film Board in Canada,⁴⁴ after the GPO considered problematic his participation in other entities out of the government. In 1940, after the beginning of the Second World War, the government recognized the power of documentaries as sources of propaganda and as a way to distribute persuasive messages to the population during wartime, and moved the documentary unit to the Ministry of Information.

In the same way in America, the documentary also gained definition by way of contrast with Hollywood. Documentary projects typically were undertaken by a small group of collaborators who owned their own equipment, worked on shoestring budgets, and performed a range of different tasks.⁴⁵ As social-documentary filmmakers gained recognition in cultural quarters in the second half of the 1930s, private foundations and social-welfare or professional groups increasingly solicited their services. In 1937, for example, the American Institute of Planners offered to work on *The City*, a \$50,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

The dichotomy between the overcrowded, unhealthy, and precarious slums; with the modern, functional, sunny and open-space of new housing projects, was a recurrent strategy that American and British documentaries used in the 1930s and the 1940s, in order to

convince people about the advantages of the slum clearance. The best example to illustrate how this dichotomy works is the 44-minute American documentary, *The City*.

The film opens with an evocation of village life in the eighteenth century yields, and then contrasts with images of poverty and pollution of industrialized cities, which in turn gives way to a playful and mildly satiric orchestration of urban movement and congestion in New York City, and its vacation escape route into New Jersey. The offered solution is a decentralized Greenbelt community, combining the security and open spaces of village life with the conveniences of modern engineering and planning. Martin Medhurst and Thomas Benson analyze the rhetoric of rhythm used in the film, and point out that the film is divided into five segments, by employing a pattern of rhythmic progression from past (rural and slow) to present (urban and fast) to future (suburban and moderate).⁴⁶ The five segments are the New England beginning, the city smoke, the man and the machine in the metropolis, the endless highway, and the Garden City. The strong contrast between the chaotic city and the new town is underscored by the soundtrack. For example, in the shifts from the New England village to the industrial city, the music shifts from harmony to dissonance. In this form, the peace of the opening sequence adopts the frenzy of the urban context. When the film offers the solution through the city of Greenbelt, the mood and imagery shift back to the opening scenes, reviving musical harmony and returning to the peaceful environment.

In the opening sequence, the narrator rhapsodizes, “The town was us, and we were part of it.” The culminating “new town” sequence filmed in Greenbelt shows the site of the first federal experiment using Lewis Mumford’s model of a small, planned community, which provided Americans with jobs they could walk to, along with social services, schools,

and shops. The Greenbelt towns were ostensibly based on the English Garden Cities, and they were, as well as, an example of what the New Deal plan wishes as the most appropriate solution. Roosevelt championed the Greenbelt towns “as a demonstration of what American communities should be doing.”⁴⁷

The main objectives behind the new planning ideas were, not only to provide a healthy lifestyle in new towns, but to re-plan existing towns out of the congested central cities, in order to formulate a regional framework of small urban nodes, each one linked together by new forms of transportation. This goal had proposed through the writings of Stein, MacKaye, Mumford and their colleagues at the RPAA. Lewis Mumford’s book *The Culture of Cities*, argued that the life of cities followed the fate of living organisms, passing through a series of developmental stages, marking the rise and fall of civilization. Mumford claimed, “Cities can take on new life by a transplantation of tissues from healthy communities in other regions and civilizations. While there is life, there is a possibility of countermovement, fresh growth.”⁴⁸ Mumford wrote the commentary for the film and his script was based on *The Culture of Cities*, which defined the Garden City as the “native form for a cooperative and socially planned society, one in which agriculture is on parity with industry, and which the necessary social basis of land ownership and land control is lodged in the community.”⁴⁹ The ideology of the film clearly represents the condemnation of the metropolis and the idealization of the Garden City model, and the associative montage suggests this dichotomy. The urban life represented by New York City is linked with the dehumanizing mechanization of the individual. In contrast, the Garden City model reflects

the modern through its architecture, but it is combined with wide green spaces, promoting education and family safety, especially for children.

One of the paradigms that supposedly differentiate documentaries from fiction films is the use of “real” images, and real people, instead of created settings and actors; however from the sample of documentaries examined in this study, all American documentaries use acted scenes to illustrate the conditions for current or future housing inhabitants. In *Better Housing* for example, we see a couple looking for a new house, while they visit the model housing; in *The City* we follow a young boy and the kind of happy life he and his family enjoy in Greenbelt towns. In *Home for Veterans* we see how the returned soldier cannot find a place to live; in *The Place We Live*, we find out the bad living conditions that a young boy and his mother have to endure in Philadelphia; and in *For the Living*, we appreciate the new life of a white family in New York City. British documentaries also use acted sequences: The life of Molly and her family is an example in *The Great Crusade*; in *New Town for Old*, the story revolves around two gentlemen discussing urban issues; and in *The Development of the English Town*, which narrates the evolution of the towns since the Roman Epoch, uses a character wearing costumes who appears three times in the film. His semi-transparent body, representing a ghost, speaks to us and explains the different cities of different times. *The Way We Live* includes fictional characters, such as a family that has to be located in temporary housing, and a multitude moving through the streets, carrying signs and demanding a new plan for the city.

In contrast to these documentaries, the British *Housing Problems*, *Homes for Workers*, and *Proud City*, shows real people speaking to the camera. This more realistic

form, presenting the actual or future dwellers of the new projects, coincides with a more technical approach to urban issues. The narrative of these three documentaries is focused on the plans and technical and numerical aspects, rather than on constructing a story that appeals to the sensibilities of the audience (see Figure 64).



Figure 64. People Speaking to the Camera in British Documentaries

Appealing to the sensibility of the audience was the main objective of the documentaries of the time, and the inclusion of children appeared to be the most effective way to attract their attention. In the British *The Great Crusade: the Story of a Million Houses*, and the American *A Place to Live*, the protagonists are children. *The Great Crusade* opens with long shots of rural British landscapes, at the same time a narrator comments, “Green and pleasant land,” assigning a positive connotation to this landscape. The following sequence shows a school’s classroom, where there is presented a girl called Molly, who is

getting a book that is a sort of prize. This sequence informs us that Molly is a good student, but when the next sequence shows Molly and her brother walking along through an area of bomb damage, we realize that this good student does not live in an appropriate environment. The narrator corroborates by informing that Molly lives in one of the worst slum districts of London. The children walk through a gate towards a house with broken windows, and enter into a domestic space described by medium-long shots. Molly and her brothers sit at the dinner table, while the mother prepares to serve them a meal. The narrator observes, "In a modern farm not even cattle would be stalled in such conditions." Then the mother puts the baby to bed, in the same bed as other the children, and the narrator observes again, "Molly's mother has long since given up trying to keep the vermin out of the bed at night." The mother puts other blankets over the children and Molly sleeps on the floor; we see her pull a coat over herself and lie down.

A similar strategy is used in *A Place to Live*. The film opens with high-angle shots of Philadelphia, showing skyscrapers, monuments, neighborhoods and industries. The narrator explains the history of the city, and how the actual city, where millions of people live and work, which has serious problems of housing. Then the camera shows overcrowded, overbuilt and old industrial neighborhoods. The next sequence portrays a schoolyard where children are playing, and then three boys, who are walking down through different city streets. Using long shots, and medium shots, the camera follows one of the boys, and a feminine voice presents to us her son. Meanwhile, the boy enters into a narrow passage lined with old and dusty walls; the mother describes him as a good kid. With a medium-close up camera, we see a nasty rat surrounding the place and later we see the frightened boy's face.

In order to make this sequence more dramatic, it is accompanied with terrifying music. Like the British documentary, the camera shows the precarious domestic space where the boy lives with his mother and little sisters. While the mother is serving a meal to the child, she tells us, “I think about the streets, growing up here. When he comes back home, I think of giving him something special for lunch. I would like to. If I could do something for all of them, just little things, I wish that all could be different” (see Figure 65 to illustrate the precarious living conditions of the children).



The Great Crusade, 1937



The Great Crusade, 1937



The Great Crusade, 1937



A Place to Live, 1948



A Place to Live, 1948



A Place to Live, 1948

Figure 65. How Children Live in Slums

The fact that these two films show schools was not a naive decision. Unlike the American boys of the 1930s that we analyzed in the previous section, these particular boys go to school, and they have a family that is concerned about them. Responsible parents

concerned about their children, but who cannot afford better housing, were the main target for slum clearance programs. As Lawrence Vale argues, “instead of using public housing (in America) to assist the unemployed, housing authorities followed congressional intent and filled the first projects with stable, two-parent families whose rent-paying ability was presumed to result from a temporary delay in upward economic mobility caused by the Great Depression, World War II, or the postwar housing shortage, rather than from any inherent personal failing.”⁵⁰

The American documentary *Homes for Veterans*, which illustrates a heroic soldier who returns home, also represents an established family and decent citizens who cannot find a place to live. We see the soldier, his wife and baby walking down streets without finding any rental room. The same strategy is used in *For the Living*; the film illustrates the new housing projects developed by the City of New York, and includes sequences of a family that is recently moved to the new apartments. We see a blonde young boy brushing teeth in a modern bathroom, and later taking books for going to school; a father wearing a tie having breakfast before he goes to work, a mother in a small but clean kitchen, and a happy baby. The picture represents a well-constituted marriage with school children, which stimulates the good habits of their kids and the home provider, seems to be more a clerk than a laborer (see Figure 66).



For the Living, 1949

Figure 66. American Family at the New Apartment in *For the Living*

As Foucault points out, the modern state, as the entity that was developed above individuals, incorporated sophisticated structures in which “individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns.”⁵¹

Documentaries include young children, while American films of the 1930s, *Violent Playground* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, include teenagers. This is not an accidental decision. Teenagers represent those kids who are already influenced by the metropolis. In the American films of the 1930s, the models for the kids are the dangerous criminals of the neighborhood; for the kids of the British films, their life expectations as low-wage workers, did not allow them to think about a future of promise; and this disappointment leads them to defiant and rebel attitudes. Whatever the reasons, these boys clearly show the consequences of the bad influences of the city. In contrast, the young children of documentaries are still in a state of purity, they can find salvation only if they leave the overcrowded and unhealthy dwellings.

British and American documentaries reiterate pro-filmic features and specific types of spaces to represent slums. Like American tenement buildings of the 1930s, documentaries

use clotheslines, small patios, and smokestacks as recurrent landscapes of slums. Even, the same patio with the same camera angle is used in two different British documentaries: *Housing Problems* (1935) and *Proud City* (1945) (see Figure 67 and 69 to illustrate recurrent depictions of slums in documentaries).



Housing Problems, 1935



The Great Crusade, 1937



The City, 1939



Development of the English Town, 1942



Proud City, 1945



For the Living, 1949

Figure 67 Clothes Lines in Documentary Films

The inclusion of clotheslines and smokestacks to portray worker-class neighborhoods, located in industrial cities, was a recurrent feature in British fiction films too. These elements seem to be a sort of visual cliché, which was strongly framed by the camera (see Figures 68 and 70 to illustrate the recurrent pro-filmic features, used in British films)



Love in a Dole, 1941



The Blue Lamp, 1950



The Card, 1952



Violent Playground, 1958



Room at the Top, 1958



Saturday Night Sunday Morning, 1961

Figure 68. Clothes Lines in British Fiction Films



The City, 1939



Development of the English Town, 1942



New Town for Old, 1942



Proud City, 1945

Figure 69. Smokestacks in British Documentaries

In British films such as the drama *Love in a Dole*, which was filmed in a studio, not only portrays the heroic British worker; here the smokestacks are part of the painting that serves to contextualize the city in the opening shots. A high-angle camera with overcrowded houses and smokestacks is also used in the comedy *The Card* at the opening of the film; but here, the inclusion of black smoke that exaggeratedly invades the screen, ironically. In realistic working-class dramas such as *Room at the Top*, *A Taste of Honey*, and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, smokestacks are shown as part of the landscape of real settings. In the crime film *Odd Man Out*, filmed in a real setting, the sequence that shows the gang in a car, heading toward the building where they will commit a robbery, uses the smokestacks as an expressive and symbolic element. Johnny does not feel well and his vision is blurred. We see the buildings and the streets that Johnny is seeing with a distorted camera, but we see also, huge smokestacks, that seem bigger for the use of the low-angle camera. Here, the smokestacks are linked with the distress that crime causes to the protagonist.

Clotheslines and smokestacks function as iconic elements that carry precise meanings. Working as symbolic elements, their inclusion is enough to communicate that these spaces are overcrowded, unhealthy, and their inhabitants are unhappy.

British documentaries also use narrow streets and devastated areas to portray the children's playgrounds of the slums. Examples such as *Housing Problems*, *The Great Crusade*, *New Town for Old*, *Proud City*, and *The Way We Live*, demonstrate that it was a systematic film technique (see Figure 71).



Love in a Dole, 1941



Odd Man Out, 1947



The Card, 1952



Room at the Top, 1958



A Taste of Honey, 1961



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner

Figure 70. Smokestacks in British Fiction Films



Housing Problems, 1935



The Great Crusade, 1937



New Town for Old, 1942



Proud City, 1945



The Way We Live, 1946

Figure 71. Children of Slums Playing in British Documentaries

In *New Town for Old*, for example, the film opens with a view over Sheffield, and two men are standing overlooking factories and houses that we can see in the background. They walk away down a street where children play on waste ground. One of the men comments, “Children should not have to grow up in these conditions.” In American documentaries, this same strategy was strongly used in *The City* and *For the Living*. In *The City*, children are not only shown playing in dirty sites, but also in dangerous places, such as sites closer to train rails, or on the banks of the East River. This danger is also mentioned in the British documentary *The Way We Live*, when the planners explain the advantages of the new plan for Plymouth through a film presented to the community. They emphasize the separation between automobiles and pedestrians, as the only way to prevent our children from having fatal accidents (see Figure 72).



The City, 1939



The City, 1939



The City, 1939



For the Living, 1949



The Way We Live, 1946



The Way We Live, 1946

Figure 72. Danger of Accidents for Our Children in Documentaries

Children playing in narrow streets or devastated sites, are also part of the landscape of British fiction films that portray working-class neighborhoods, such as *Odd Man Out*, *The Card*, *Room at the Top*, *Violent Playground* and *A Taste of Honey* (see Figure 73). In *Room at the Top*, children of the streets play a relevant role at the ending sequences of the film. When Joe wakes up and opens his eyes in the middle of a working-class street, after he was beaten by a group of thugs, he sees the faces of two children. This sequence is used as a symbolic form to represent the dichotomy between the innocence (portrayed by the children) and Joe's guilt, who thinks that Alice's fatal accident was his fault. Here, the children represent the state of purity, before Joe became a materialist and arriviste person.



Odd Man Out, 1947



The Card, 1952



Room at the Top, 1958



Violent Playground, 1958



A Taste of Honey, 1961



A Taste of Honey, 1961

Figure 73. Children of Slums in British Fiction Films



Figure 74. Children's Faces in Documentaries

Documentaries frequently used medium and close-up images of children's faces to emphasize their innocent condition. (See Figure 74) A narrator, who comments that the future of our children is something that concerns us, frequently accompanies these images. Young children framed by medium or close-up camera are also used in British films, and like clotheslines and smokestacks, children's faces function as symbolic elements. In *Room at the Top*, a little girl playing in a ruined place is shown when Joe goes to see the house where he grew up. The girl portrays Joe's past, in the same way that in *A Taste of Honey*, a young boy with Down syndrome illustrates the future of the protagonist. The teenager Jo is pregnant, as a result of a brief encounter with a kid that she will never see again. Jo is looking at this young boy playing in a ruined site; the camera shows him by long-angle shots and close-up. Her friend Geoffrey arrives and gives Jo a doll to practice as the baby, but Jo is devastated; she throws away the doll and screams, "I don't want this baby, I don't want to be a mother, I

don't want to be a woman!...Look at him (the boy with Down syndrome), he came out wrong, the baby could be like him!" In this film, Jo portrays a teenager who lives with her single-mother in precarious conditions. She is shown at the beginning of the film as a smart kid that goes to school, like the boys of *The Great Crusade* and *A Place to Live*. Unlike these boys, who have a family concerned about their future, Jo's mother Helen loves her daughter, but she left Jo alone for a weekend to have fun with her boyfriend. The night Jo was alone in the city was the night that she had her first sexual encounter, and the reason her future is now ruined. This film tells us about the vulnerability of our children, and how just simply a moment of parental neglect is enough to condemn their future, although they have been good kids and brilliant students (see Figure 75 for the representation of children's faces in British fiction films).



Room at the Top, 1958



Room at the Top, 1958

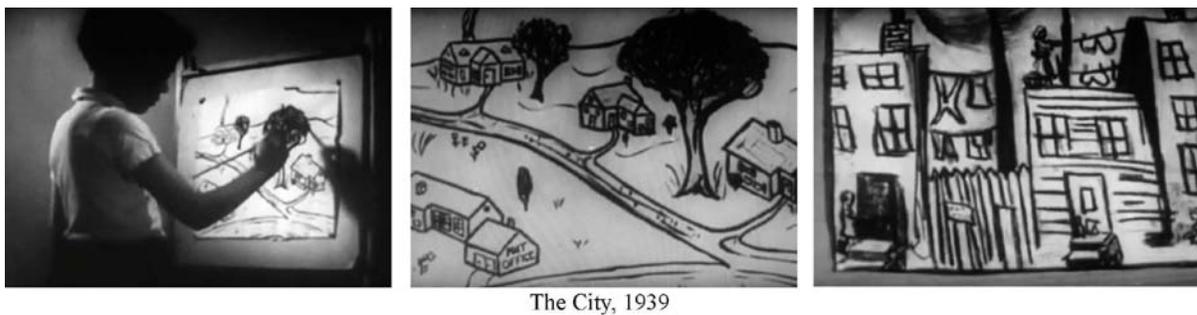


A Taste of Honey, 1961

Figure 75. Children's Faces in British Fiction Films

On the other hand, American and British documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s used children as a persuasive way to argue in favor of new housing projects promoted by the government. In the new projects, children are always framed within green spaces, or at least in wide-open playgrounds.

The City emphasizes the advantages for children through the representation of open green spaces, the separation between motorcars and pedestrians, and the inclusion of large playgrounds and schools for children, where they can grow safe and healthy. *The City* includes long and medium shots of parks with children playing, always accompanied with optimistic music. For example, we see a father resting in his garden and the mother bathing their baby. The narrator comments, “We live a decent kind of live here. We fathers have a little time to watch our kids and play with them. The people who lead us out of this place didn’t forget the air and sun that we need for growing. There are flowers as babies, just watch them grow.” After the narrator lists the advantages of the town, shots of modernist buildings show the school. The narrator informs us that the school is the heart of the communitarian life, “City, school and land, in active partnership, provide the materials for life and growth...children placing the good and bad, choosing the best.” Now we see a child making a painting, as portraying a group of single-family houses placed in green parks. The camera moves to the right and now we see a painting of a slum with overcrowded buildings, clotheslines and smoke, at the same time a terrifying music begins. The next sequence shows the slums and the next, Greenbelt again (see Figure 76).



The City, 1939

Figure 76. Children's Paintings in *The City*

The narrator comments, “You take your choice, one is real, one is possible... we have to build and re-build again our cities, clean again, open to the sky...you take your choice, order has come, order and life together...a human way of living, for you and your children, the choice is yours.” The film ends with images of children playing, a baby doing his first step, and the final shot is a close-up camera of a little boy smiling.

In *New Town for Old*, whose main argument is the need for town planning in Sheffield, which was heavily bombed during the World War II, shows open countryside as well as, some of the 30,000 new houses that were built; we see children playing in fields and climbing trees. *The Development of the English Town* shows the town of Bournville and the narrator explains, “Modern town planning” can provide towns with “open spaces, greenery, safe places for children to play and recreation”...“good schools” and “the charm of gardens to family homes.” Bournville is used to illustrate all the features that should have the planned towns, such as pleasant roads by tree-lined borders, and houses that “stand close to the open country, plenty of light and air, places where neighbors can talk and sit together and safe playgrounds for children.” In *Proud City* when the architects are explaining the plan for London, Arthur Ling notes, “Schools have not any playgrounds, and they are too near to them factories and industries; is a typical picture of narrowing and overcrowding which need drastic re-construction.” This film illustrates the ideal city with open green spaces where children walk and play. American documentaries *Homes for Veterans* and *For the Living* present similar arguments, and illustrate the new projects by playgrounds and green squares of the New York’s social housing developments, built during the 1930s and 1940s. *A Place to Live* illustrates the wishes of a mother and her son through images of townhouses placed in

green parks where children are playing. At the end of the film, we see mother and son's faces asking for a new and decent place to live (see Figure 77 for the representation of decent places for children).



The City, 1939



The City, 1939



Homes for Workers, 1939



New Town for Old, 1942



New Town for Old, 1942



Proud City, 1945



Homes for Veterans, 1946



A Place to Live, 1948



For the Living, 1949

Figure 77. Children Playing Safe in Documentaries

Both, the Garden City and Modernist projects that are portrayed in American and British documentaries, were competing discourses to solve the problem of city growth. Both models saw functionality and zoning use as the main principle to organize the city space, and both used the green discourse linked with the future of the children, advocating fresh air,

sunlight and the green environment in the form of parks and playgrounds where children can play safely over the glance of their caring parents.

The City Must Be Rethought, We Need Urban Planners!

Documentaries functioned as a powerful form to validate planning as one of the most important disciplines to solve the problems of the city. The documentaries examined in this study used similar pro-filmic features and rhetorical practices to convince the audience that town planning was the rational, and many times, scientific response to social problems; as Golden and Ward pointed out, town planning was presented as a “social medicine.” On the other hand, documentaries, especially in Britain, served to place the urban planner as a relevant figure within the society, as an expert who was able to solve, through scientific methods, the problems of the living conditions of the population. Documentaries about urban planning functioned as clear forms of persuasion, including in many of them, the possible questions that people had about the new urban models. By providing rationalistic and convincing answers, and using not only planners, but public authorities, they aimed to cover any sort of doubts within the population, especially because many of the government programs introduced radical changes in towns and housing models. Documentaries also helped to introduce the new aesthetic of the Modern Movement in architecture, providing rationalistic explanations about the convenience of using new materials, new techniques of construction, and reinforcing the idea that the new architecture was conceived for the health improvement of the population. This discourse was systematically articulated through positioning the idyllic nature, the fresh air, the sun, and the open space as the opposite of the overcrowding and unhealthy slum housing. Proof of this clear association is the inclusion of natural landscapes in many of these films (see Figure 78).

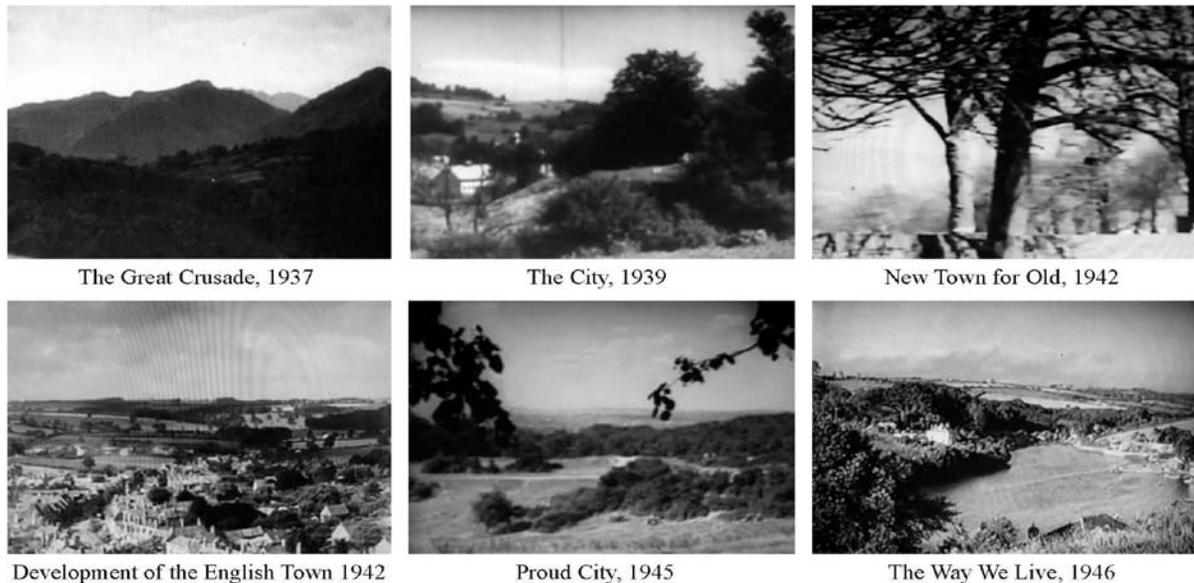


Figure 78. Natural Landscapes in Documentaries

As Foucault notes, since the eighteenth century, a ruled regime dominated by techniques of government, which its main target was the population,⁵² created the rules, the laws, and the formation of specific governmental apparatuses, in order to shape a society of regulations and disciplines.⁵³ Urban planning was one of the institutions of the administrative state, and from its authority, it created sets of knowledge, supported by rationalistic and scientific proofs, studied by experts and backed by governmental institutions. The audiovisual feature of films could offer the most appropriate way to show the plans for the city, and they also could include local authorities, who personally presented the projects.

British documentaries such as *Home for Workers*, *Proud City*, and *The Way We Live*, include commentators who are public figures. *Home for Workers* presents a survey of Liverpool Corporation's housing programme, and it is introduced and commented by L.H. Keay, Architect and Director of Housing in Liverpool. As Keay explains at the opening of

the film, it “aims to illustrate the vast amount of work done by the Liverpool Corporation to re-house tenants of insanitary houses.” *Proud City* was commissioned by the Ministry of Information and aimed to explain the Plan of London County. In the film appears Lord Latham, leader of the London County Council; Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Professor of Town Planning at University of London; Mr. J.H. Forshaw, Architect to the London County Council; and the architects Mr. A.A. Ling, and Mr. H.A Bray. *The Way We Live*, shows the conception of the Watson-Abercrombie plan for rebuilding the city of Plymouth after the war, including the architect Abercrombie, who personally describes and explains the plan. In the American *For the Living*, realized by the Television Unit of the City of New York, includes the Mayor of New York who presents the social housing projects developed by the city during the last years. The inclusion of public authorities that directly speak to the camera and explain the plans, served as a persuasive strategy; they give credibility to the speech, and establish a compromise between the authorities and the population.

The film techniques that these documentaries used to validate urban planning and governmental intervention, were: (1) the inclusion of numerical data, graphics, and any sort of plans, sketches and models to explain both, the problems and the solutions; (2) the inclusion of real professionals set in their offices, working with large teams; or in the sites where the project will be built. In some cases, they appear explaining their ideas to the community or to civic committees. (3) The use of acted sequences to create a story about a specific family, which is the actual or future housing dweller. (4) Almost all films include demolitions to illustrate that the unhealthy slums are disappearing. (5) Following the same logic, almost all films not only show the finished new buildings, often by aerial shots or by

models, but also the construction of the new ones. In the American case, these constructions serve as governmental propaganda to promote the creation of new jobs for unemployed people during the Great Depression, as part of the New Deal plan. In the British case, these shots serve to demonstrate that public authorities are working on their housing plans.

The use of numerical data and graphics was used by both, American and British documentaries. The American documentary *Better Housing*, which was a News Flash included in commercial cinemas, presents graphics to illustrate the amount of money invested in residential housing between 1928 and 1934. In the British *Home for Workers*, L.H. Keay shows by graphic schemas the number of re-housed people by the Corporation. To illustrate the locations of new projects, it includes graphics of the city plan, marking the new housing projects. The American *Problems of Housing* includes graphics to illustrate the proportion of Americans living in houses of different prices and years of construction. *Homes for Veterans* include graphical techniques to announce the housing's target for the next years; *The Development of the English Town* shows the plans of new cities, as well as, graphics of new developments appearing in *New Town for Old*, *Proud City*, and *The Way We Live*. While American documentaries use simple graphics that can be understood by common people, British documentaries include more complex representations, and sometimes, previous knowledge in urban issues and familiarity with systems of representation is needed in order to comprehend the professional's explanations. This creates a greater distance between the planner and the public, and gives to the professional an expert status, from where he speaks with authority on matters within his domain (see Figure 79).

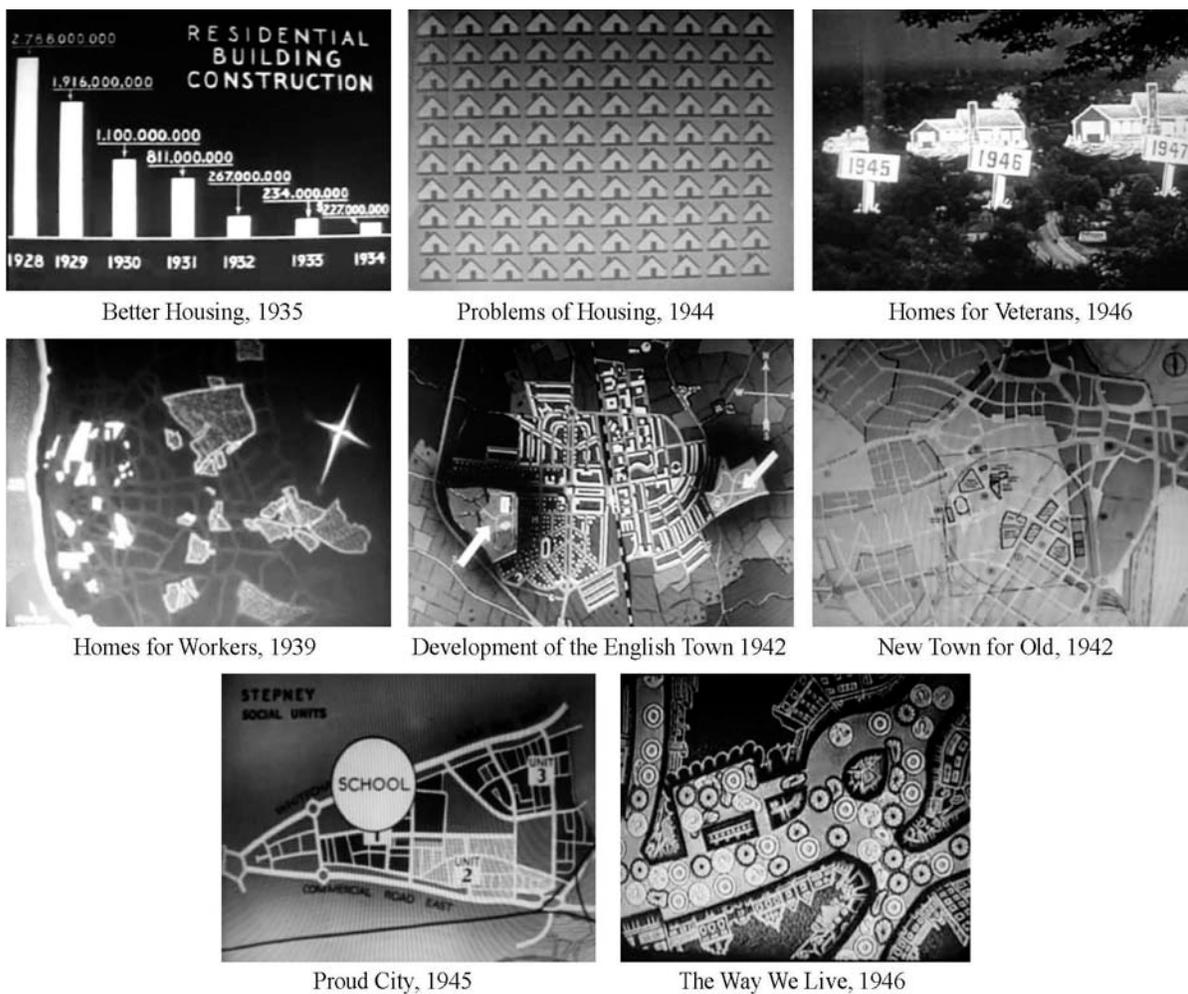


Figure 79. Graphics in Documentaries

American documentaries tend to emphasize the private construction, which could be afforded thanks to the Amortized Mortgage insured by the government. We see this private intervention in *Better Housing* and *Homes for Veterans*. In *Home for Veterans* the solution for the housing deficit is raised through local committees, which include the local housing authority, representatives of the community, but also representatives of homebuilders, home financing, materials, and real estate dealers, which are all private participants. In *Better*

Housing the discourse aims to stimulate home ownership, emphasizing the possibility of acquiring a house with loans guaranteed by the government. In contrast, all British documentaries tend to emphasize the role of public authorities, working in full coordination with expert planners. Here the planner is presented as a team leader, capable to solve complex problems by empirical and scientific knowledge.

In *Proud City*, we see a group of professionals walking across buildings in ruins, using special tools, measuring, taking notes. The narrator comments-

Our job is to carry out the wishes of London's people. In 1941 we asked to architects to prepare a plan for bringing a new order and dignity to the whole of the County of London. But first we have to find out everything about this great city with a plan to rebuild, everything, about its history, its geography, people and the way they live. We have to know how much of it is completely destroyed and how much of it is in a bad state, but we have to rebuild anyway all the old houses. They (the architects) have to know what the people are thinking.

Following the sequence of professionals working in the site, the camera shows people of slums by medium and close angles: children, families, and working people. This associative montage aims to communicate how the team of experts is working for the people's needs (see figure 80).



Figure 80. The Work of Planners in *Proud City*

Proud City is a good example to illustrate how the mechanisms of biopolitics work: the State intervenes at the level at which general phenomena are determined. The biopolitics discourse is clear, when the narrator explains:

We need to know how many trains, motorcars, and buses pass into the street, and at what times; and how long it takes people to get to the work every day, and where they work, and in what sort of conditions. We have to know all about the conditions of people's health. What the mortality rate was, how many new Londoners were being born in the County year-by-year. In fact, everything that affects the life of Londoners, past, present and future must be taken in to consideration in our plans.

This discourse is accompanied with shots of physicians, nurses, health centers, and “planners.” Here the planner’s work is located in the same range with professionals of health (see Figure 81).



Figure 81. The Status of the Planner in *Proud City*



Figure 82. Architects in Documentaries

The inclusion of architects is a strategy used by American documentaries, such as *Homes for Veterans* and *For the Living*; and by British documentaries, such as *The*

Development of the English Town, New Town for Old, Proud City and *The Way We Live* (see Figure 82).

American documentaries show on-screen brief shots of architects, only as a way to inform that there are professionals working on the plans. On the other hand, British documentaries tend to show recurrent shots, where architects and planners are on-screen, portrayed as professionals who work with precise data. However in *The Way We Live*, Abercrombie is presented more as an artist than a scientific person, as we discuss in the part dedicated to the representation of the city.

One of the findings of this study is that the discourse of documentaries does not condemn the city per se, but does indict the industrial city and its slums. Especially British documentaries, promote the urban life in a smaller scale, which has to be carefully planned by specialists. We see this discourse in *Proud City*, in the sequence that Forshaw and Abercrombie speak about the London Plan:

A very important thing we discovered when we made a survey, and that is the spirit of the old village's communities, a group of people joint together, because they have the same interests...London, of course, used to be a collection of scattered village communities. Only 200 years ago, the central core was quite small. Round it were the villages each living in its own community life and each surrounded by open country. We must not forget that it had been some good planning in the past...these good things we must keep.

The plans presented in British documentaries, such as *Homes for Workers*, although emphasize the modernist Gerard Gardens; the same film includes new developments of Garden City suburbs developed in Liverpool. Keay explains that the new houses have a communitarian center and “any sort of amenities” such as churches, schools and libraries. We can see modernist buildings, but both houses and public spaces are inspired on traditional English villages (see Figure 83).



Homes for Workers, 1939

Figure 83. New Suburbs in *Homes for Workers*

The Development of the English Town, clearly promote the ideas of Garden Cities, illustrated by the aerial shot of Letchworth, or recurrent shots of Bournville to represent the same ideal: self-contained, green and human-scale cities. This concept of returning to traditions is also portrayed in the American *The City* and *A Place to Live*. In *The City*, the link with the traditional English village is clear in the first sequences of the film, and in the presentation of the solution, the Greenbelt towns, which are conceived as self-contained communities. A similar discourse is used in *A Place to Live*, when the narrator describes with nostalgia the history of Philadelphia. When finally we see the ideal house, where the boy and his mother wish to live, traditional townhouses surrounded with green parks are the illustration of this family’s hopes.

The nineteenth century industrial past seems to be the major fault that most of these films recognize and want to remedy through urban planning. The Mayor of New York speaks to the camera in the final sequence of *For the Living*: “The slums mean disease and crime; the new projects mean health and happiness. There is only one answer, the slum must go.” However both American and British documentaries proposed solutions that range from the low-density Garden City to the high-density Radiant City; and the way to build consensus in order to communicate a coherent discourse, seemed to be through the concept of fresh air, sunlight, and space for children play. This set of attributes works more as an opposition to the nineteenth century industrial city and its slums, rather than attributes of a precise model. In any event, one of the forms to communicate this discourse was through the validation of the urban planner and the planning discipline, presented as a social medicine, and the only way to solve the problems of city growth.

Stigmatization, Apartments, and the Place Where Poor People Live

Pamela Robertson notes that the apartment offers a vision of home centered on values such as visibility, contact, density, friendship, mobility, impermanence, and porousness, which sharply contrasts to more traditional views of home as private, stable, and family-based.⁵⁴ Robertson identifies the apartment plot and illustrates it by films such as *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), *Artists and Models* (1955), *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* (1963), *Rear Window* (1954), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), etc.

Sharon Marcus argues that the apartment functions as a micro-cosm of the city. Its capacity to make urban and domestic spaces continuous, because its impossibility to fully separate the city from the home, allows the apartment as vantage points for visual observation and exhibition, nodes of commercial and sexual exchange, and settings for the sensory overload and chance encounters associated with crowds.⁵⁵

The apartment living that possesses blurred frontiers between the public and the private space appears as a foreign lifestyle for common middle-class families, especially for Americans, who celebrate the self-contained communities as the most appropriate context to raise a family. Robertson notes that the predominance of suburban for the married white, leave the apartment as the only choice for the people excluded from the suburban imaginary, including single, divorced, African Americans, working-class whites, ethnic minorities and gay people.⁵⁶

Erving Goffman has been celebrated as a foundational figure in the development of "micro-sociology." His social description and theory are focused, not on large-scale patterns and institutions, but on the minutiae of daily interactions. Richard Handler describes

Goffman's work on the understanding of social construction of morality, and of social construction of the self.⁵⁷ "What the individual is for himself is not something that he invented. It is what his significant others have come to see he should be."⁵⁸ There is the emphasis on the ecology of human interaction, by which Goffman means socially constructed spatial arrangements that help to define social roles, cultural assumptions, and moral claims.⁵⁹ Observation, in short, is hardly the empirical visual-rational practice of positivist science; rather, it is a multi-dimensional, multi-sensory moral activity.⁶⁰ Goffman's book *Stigma* published in 1963, concerns the relationship between people who are stigmatized and those who are normal.⁶¹ Goffman's account is grounded in a categorization of three kinds of stigma: those based on "abominations of the body," on "blemishes of individual character" (illustrated in his work by criminals, prisoners, homosexuals, and the mentally ill), and on "race, nation, and religions." People stigmatized in these different ways produce similar identity politics, since at base, they all face the same problem, that of incomplete personhood.⁶² The stigmatized organize themselves in a number of ways, from "huddle-together self-help clubs," to "residential clubs," to "national associations," to "mutual claims networks," and in "urban milieu" as neighborhoods or districts.⁶³

The stigmatization of the apartment dweller functions in American and British films between the 1930s and the 1960s, as a strong cultural framework, which defines and shapes individual identities, creating the differences among the normal and the abnormal citizen. In the same way, poverty has been described in systematic forms, which tend to stereotype the identity of the poor. Normality here does not mean majority, but a desirable pattern.

This stigmatization of the apartment is portrayed in part, by the relationship between poverty and multi-storied buildings. As we discussed in previous sections, the modernist high-density building was thought of as a cheap solution to relocate slum dwellers. Its distinctive architectonic image and its urban pattern, help to differentiate these buildings from other kinds of neighborhoods. In big cities such as New York, social housing functions as isolated communities, separated by streets from the regular urban pattern of the city (see Figure 84).

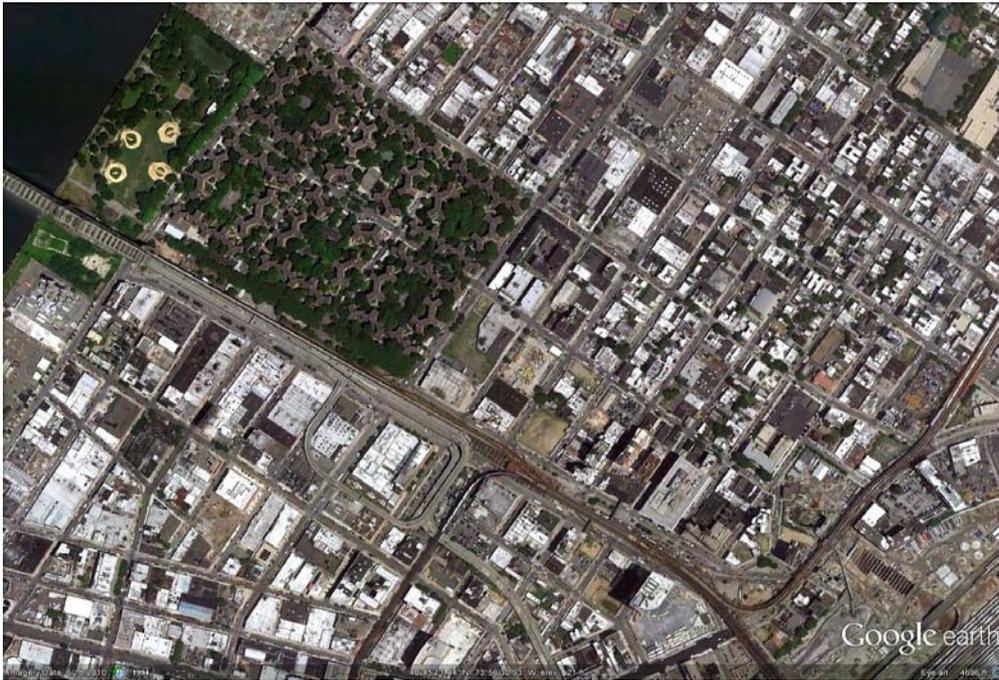


Figure 84. Queensbridge Project, New York, 1940
Image from Google Earth

The same case can be described in films such as *Violent Playground*, which Gerard Gardens functions as an identifiable type of housing that stigmatizes its dwellers. One of the findings of this project reveals that documentaries developed during the 1930s and the 1940s, helped to define this stigmatized image of the slum inhabitant. Despite, that the aim of these films was to promote the benefits of the slum clearance, the recurrent association between poverty and multi-storied buildings collaborated to shape this stereotype (see Figure 85).



Housing Problems, 1935



Prud City, 1945

Figure 85. The Stigmatization of Apartments in Documentaries

Besides the tenement buildings of American films of the 1930s, which briefly show domestic spaces and focus on the street activity, British fiction films portray poverty in similar forms. Films from the 1930s, 1940s and the first-half of the 1950s, use recurrent depictions of the kitchen space. On the other hand, kitchens in British films not only serve to frame female characters, but also they serve to inform the audience of the social class of the

house's inhabitants. In films such as *The Stars Look Down*, *Love in a Dole*, and *The Card*, which represent working-class houses, the rudimentary stove serves as fire place, where always there is a clotheslines, and old saucepans (see Figure 86).



Figure 86. Worker-Class Kitchens in British Fiction Films

This portrait, similar to the images shown by documentaries of the time, seem to create a sort of visual cliché, in the same way that clotheslines, smokestacks, and children playing in dirty streets functions as common ways to communicate poverty and slums.

Films such as *The Stars Look Down*, *Love in a Dole*, *The Common Touch* and *The Card*, portray the laborer as a heroic character, which thanks to his sacrifice, the progress of the nation is possible. On the other hand, British films of the end 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, commonly categorized as Kitchen Sink films, or New Way films, tend to portray domestic spaces in a quite different form, and these representations modify the discourse associated with laborers, as portrayed in previous decades. In films such as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, the worker-class houses, where the young protagonists live, are small, functional and possess the minimum

standards for a modest, but decent life. Both films link the domestic spaces with fathers, the retired laborers portrayed as characters visibly devastated (see Figure 87).



Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 1960



The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, 1962

Figure 87. The Representation of the British Laborer in 1960s Fiction Films

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Arthur's father does not participate in any conversation, and spends his day watching television. In *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, Colin's father is bedridden dying of cancer. The final days of these former workers, far from having a heroic role in society, seem to be immersed in a consumerist society that has nothing to offer, except superfluous entertainment through the television. The approach of these films indirectly, criticizes the previous stereotypes of working-class characters, and communicates that solving the basic functional problems of the daily life is not enough to produce happy families and happy lives.

Fiction films also contributed to stigmatize inhabitants of apartments; despite the fact that they do not belong to working-class people. In *The Lost Weekend*, the apartment is the setting for the emotional crisis of an alcoholic New York writer, in particular on a weekend of alcoholic binge. The same year, *Scarlett Street* portrays the setting for the clandestine-extra marital relationship of Chris and the unscrupulous Kitty.

In *The Apartment*, the company managers of the unhappy and lonely clerk C.C. Baxter, use his West Side New York apartment for their various extramarital liaisons. The personnel director Mr. Sheldrake also uses Baxter's apartment for his encounters with the elevator operator Fran Kubelik. When Fran decides to commit suicide and takes extra-doses of pills, Baxter phones Mr. Sheldrake, and we realize that he lives with his wife and children in a traditional single-family house. The link between clandestine affairs with apartments and on the other hand, marriage and family with single-family homes, is also portrayed in the romantic comedy *Any Wednesday*.

From the examined American films, settings placed in urban apartments are usually reserved for youthful singles, easy women and terminal bachelors. If these characters decide to put their life in order and marry, they leave the apartments and move to conventional accommodations. Films such as *Dark Victory* and *Come Blow your Horn*, illustrate this tendency. In *Dark Victory*, the socialite Judith Traherne enjoys her hedonistic existence living in an elegant Manhattan apartment, but a horse-jumping accident forces her to change her lifestyle, when a doctor discovers that Judith suffers from a potentially fatal brain tumor. The doctor convinces her she should spend her final months happy, dignified, and with the

man she loves. They marry and move to Vermont to inhabit a cozy country house, where Judith enjoys now cooking, gardening and caring for her husband and house.

In *Come Blow Your Horn*, a playboy lives in a modern apartment in New York, while his young brother lives with his parents in a suburban house. The suburban life of the family is represented through the kitchen space, where the old couple spends their time together; while the metropolis is represented with impatient drivers, busy people and attractive girls that visit the bachelor's dwelling. At the end of the film, when he finally finds the girl of his dreams and plans to get married, they decide to move to a house, and leave the apartment to the young brother.

Apartments where frivolous characters inhabit are portrayed in films such as *An Affair to Remember*. The playboy Nicky Ferrante and the nightclub singer Terry McKay, have a romance on a cruise from Europe to New York. Nicky and Terry live in their own downtown apartments, and despite the fact they are engaged to other people, both agree to reunite at the top of the Empire State Building in six months.

In *Return to Peyton Place*, Alison Mackenzie leaves her small town and goes to New York City to meet with her married editor. They spend the night together working in his downtown office, which is a penthouse apartment with a living space in the upper floor. They start a relationship that Alison decides to stop at the end of the film.

In *Pillow Talk*, Jan Morrow is a single, apparently independent and successful interior decorator, who lives in an apartment in New York City. For problems with the telephone company's service, she has to share the telephone line with Brad Allen, a playboy and creative Broadway composer, who also lives in an apartment. Far from representing Jan as a

liberated woman that enjoys her independence, her talks with the housekeeping reveal that actually she is not completely happy, and the film ends when Jan finally conquers Brad.

Apartments are also used as settings in romantic comedies such as *Who is Been Sleeping in My Bed*, and *Sex and the Single Girl* (see Figure 88 for the representation of apartments in American films).



Pillow Talk, 1959



The Apartment 1960

Came Blow your Horn, 1963



Who is Sleeping in My Bed, 1963

Sex and the Single Girl, 1964

Figure 88. Apartments in American Comedies

Romantic films tend to portray apartments during the 1950s and 1960s, in a fairly recurrent way: apartments are homes for singles, apparently rich characters, who enjoy a seductive lifestyle full of frivolous entertainment. From the windows of these luxurious dwellings, we can see the skyline of Manhattan. Like aerial shots that are used at opening

sequences to inform where the story takes place, apartments' windows portray a symbolic metropolis, where everything fits, but nothing can be described in their particularity (see Figure 89).



An Affair to Remember, 1955



Return to Peyton Place, 1961

Figure 89. The Symbolic Skyline of Manhattan

The stigmatization of apartments and the celebration of suburban single-family houses are portrayed in comedies, such as *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, *Don't Eat the Daisies*, and *Father's Little Dividend*. In *Mr. Blandings*, the film opens with a panoramic view of New York City. A narrator comments: "Manhattan, New York, U.S.A. In any discussion of contemporary America, how people live, we must start with Manhattan, New York: glass modern giant of concrete and steel reaching to the heaven." A high-angle camera moves to show skyscrapers. The next sequence show masses of people at railway stations, cars stuck in streets, angry people honking, while the narrator ironically says, "happy

benefitters of the advantages of this great metropolis; great boulevards, a transportation system, the cafes, the peace and privacy of a day of sun.” Now we see hurried people eating sandwiches, and an overcrowded beach with thousands of people. In the next shot we see the narrator, Bill Col, who speaks directly to the camera, meanwhile he is at a skyscraper in construction. Bill introduces to us Jim Blandings, one of thousands of New Yorkers living with his family in a Manhattan apartment. This film does not criminalize the metropolis, but portrays it as a hostile environment, and its first sequences recall both, the 1921 documentary *Manhatta* and the 1939 documentary *The City* (see Figure 90). The dichotomy between “natural” and “unnaturalness”, discussed in Chapter 2, seems to represent the metropolis as a unnaturalness for “normal” people live.



Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House 1948

Figure 90. Opening Shots in *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*

Later we realize that Mr. Blandings and his family move to a suburban house as “normal” people must do. To portray the inconvenience of living in apartments for families with children, Mr. Blandings’ family and the family of *Don’t Eat the Daisies*, emphasize the lack of comfort, and the small size of spaces. In *Don’t Eat the Daisies*, children amuse themselves by throwing objects to the passers by, and the smallest must be enclosed in a sort of cage in the living room. In *Father’s Little Dividend*, the suburban dream and the

ownership desire is clearly established when the film opens. We see the excited father walking to his home located in a low-density, green suburb. Sitting on his sofa, he declares, "You know what a man is: you work hard for years, build a home, and raise a family... I remember the day... I caught my usual train; it was a beautiful day when I left the bus and walked home from the station. I was thinking I'm the lucky man, I was with a nice house, all paid." The problems start when the newlywed daughter that lives with her husband in a downtown apartment, because "they can't afford a house," realizes that she is pregnant and the parents in love decide to build a home for them, close to their suburban house.

In *Don't Eat the Daisies*, the metropolis is portrayed not only as an inappropriate environment for a family with young children, but a place that can offer dangerous temptations. When Kate, Lawrence, and the children move from New York City to the suburbs, Kate decides that Lawrence, who has to work in the metropolis as entertainment critic, should stay at a downtown hotel; meanwhile she decorates the new home. Deborah, an arriviste actress and dancer, in her attempt to seduce Lawrence, flirts with him; meanwhile they start dating at bohemian downtown bars. In one of their dates, Deborah looks around her and confesses to Lawrence, "Full of strangers...I don't want to go home, because there is nothing there; I'm alone... parties, beautiful women, and lonely, lonely." Lawrence realizes that he has everything a man needs: a good marriage and family, and a great home. He decides to come back to his suburban life far away from the big city and its temptations. In the suburbs, Kate engages in communitarian activities with the children's school, and also participates in the school play. *Return to Peyton Place* and *Don't Eat the Daisies* portray the metropolis as exciting places that stimulate intellectual and artistic creation, but at the end,

family and moral values prevail over the others. On the other hand, dramas tend to portray apartments as claustrophobic and distressing spaces. *The Apartment*, which is a hybrid of comedy and drama, portrays both the lonely, unglamorous life of Baxter, and the frivolous encounters of the company's managers. The final message of the film condemns the metropolitan life and portrays it as an anonymous and dehumanized world of selfish interests. In this film, domestic spaces of the apartment are complemented with work spaces of the company, represented as huge areas full of equal desks, in where individuality is subject to a productive chain. Both spaces, the private and the public, create the identity of the character (see Figure 91).



The Apartment, 1960



Figure 91. Domestic Spaces and Work Spaces in *The Apartment*

In *Two for the Seesaw* (1962), Jerry Ryan is a lawyer from Nebraska, who has recently separated from his wife. He moves to New York City, which is portrayed as an anonymous place where Jerry wanders aimlessly, taking long walks at night. Jerry meets

bohemian people and artists, which seem to enjoy parties and casual encounters. At a party he meets the dancer Gittel Mosca, and starts a romantic and stormy relationship, which is hampered by their differences in background and temperament. Jerry realizes that even though he is divorced from his former wife on paper, they continue bonded in many ways, and he decides to return to Nebraska. In this film, the streets of the metropolis, and its domestic spaces, portrayed through dark and old apartments that are far from any stereotype of home, serve to represent a landscape of uncertainty, insecurity and impermanence. New York is for Jerry a place for transit, where he fails to establish roots, neither plans a future (see Figure 92).



Two for the Seesaw, 1962



Two for the Seesaw, 1962



Two for the Seesaw, 1962

Figure 92. Apartments in *Two for the Seesaw*



Our Daily Bread, 1934



Boy of the Streets, 1937



Dead End, 1937



One Third of the Nation, 1939



The Apartment, 1960



Two for the Seesaw, 1962

Figure 93. Apartments' Kitchens in American Films

American films' kitchens portray well-established families, caring parents and healthy environments, as I discuss later. When the film is meant to represent the opposite, such as poverty, dysfunctional families, bachelors, recently divorced, etc., the kitchen functions as a symptomatic feature that informs the kind of people who inhabit this space; and the apartment's kitchens reiterate this representation. In *Our Daily Bread*, we see the austere kitchen of the New York apartment, where Mary and the unemployed John live before they move to the countryside. In *Boy of the Streets*, *Dead End*, and *Angels with Dirty*

Faces, one room apartments require that a kitchen's work be carried out in the same room, where the bed is placed. In *The Apartment* and *Two for the Seesaw*, kitchens are old, unfashionable, uncomfortable, small, and dark spaces inhabited by lonely men (see Figure 93).

In British dramas such as *Room at the Top*, the apartment where Jo and Alice have their clandestine encounters is represented as a claustrophobic space, where the couple is never completely happy. In *Look Back in Anger*, the apartment is also a space of permanent conflict, and in *Darling*, Diana feels that the apartment where she lives with Robert, is her prison (see Figure 94).



Room at the Top, 1958



Look Back in Anger, 1959



Darling, 1965

Figure 94. Sense of Distress in British Apartments

The metropolis, portrayed as a dangerous place, or at least, as an anonymous and unstable landscape is represented by non-spaces and apartments. Both, the townscape and domestic spaces of apartments serve to define the social and cultural assumptions of its inhabitants. Both the metropolis and the apartment fail to complete the selfhood; they never can offer the living conditions for normal people.

PART 2: THE DISCOURSE OF SMALL COMMUNITIES IN FILMS

The metropolis cannot be fully described, if not using the constant comparison with its opposite. The small town pastoralism is used in *Boys of the Town*, *One Third of the Nation*, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, and so on. In the same way, we saw how documentaries promoted new developments through the small town pastoralism discourse. The notion of identity, sense of belonging, and the development of longer relationships, seems to be framed with self-contained communities and clear urban images, in terms of Kevin Lynch and Christian Norberg-Shultz; in contraposition to non-spaces, (non-sense), as we discussed before. Communitarian life is represented by American and British films between the 1930s and the 1960s as the most desirable lifestyle, and this discourse was strongly linked with specific spatial representations. This section analyzes the recurrent film techniques and rhetorical practices used to depict the communitarian life, as well as its public and domestic spaces.

Discourse of Small Towns in America: Main Street, Church and Closeness to Nature

The work of Emanuel Levy⁶⁴ describes a large number of American fiction films about small-towns; Levy's focus is the social life promoted in small-towns, rather than a description of their spatial features. As a response to his project, Levy analyzes common themes and characters in terms of social life. He illustrates small-towns through controlled communities identified with land values; these communities evolve over time and offer a mirror of society. Levy describes the small-town films of the 1930s and the 1940s as films that intended to promote idealism and optimism, in order to mitigate the effects of the Great Depression. As Lewis Jacobs points out, "one remedy for the problems caused by the Depression was the return to the soil."⁶⁵ The film *Our Daily Bread*, for example, clearly promotes the return to the soil and encourages collaborative communities.

Representative stories that take place in small towns are *Our Town*, based on Thornton Wilder's play from 1938, which won a Pulitzer Prize; and *It's a Wonderful Life*, based on a 1943 short story entitled "The Greatest Gift," written by Philip Van Doren Stern. *It's a Wonderful Life* not only illustrates the celebration of small town life versus big city life, the film's hero is a potential urban planner. The character George Bailey declares he wants to "build things, design new buildings, and plan modern cities." Other films such as *Kings Row*, *Meet Me in St Louis*, *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, and *The Magic Town*, describe in a consistent form the relationships between the physical and social landscape. However, the approach to themes about community is not always framed in the same way in terms of plot and characters; for example the film *The Stranger* sets a criminal in a small town, we can realize that crime plots rarely set in small towns during the studied

period. By contrast, small towns are used to represent ordinary people, their romantic stories, and also stories that revolve around families, as the main social nucleus and the foundation of any healthy society. These films narrate moments of happiness interspersed with problems and difficult times, in order to represent the honest American citizen. From the sample of films examined in this study, small town films are usually dramas and comedies, and with the exception of *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, they portray characters with strong conservative moral values.

These films use recurrent pro-filmic features, characters and types of social life that form a distinguishable discourse, which celebrate the small and self-contained communities as the most desirable lifestyle, and illustrate recurrent kinds of private and public spaces, which serve to identify the community.

As Kenneth MacKinnon points out, small town is “an amalgam of elements much less to do with actual American small towns than with manifold literary descriptions and repeated cinematic treatments.”⁶⁶ Some of the spatial elements that characterize these films are: the closeness to nature or countryside, an identifiable and delimited urban pattern, the presence of Main Street, public institutions such as the church, the school and social clubs, which serve to articulate the social relations of the inhabitants, low-density neighborhoods of single-family houses, traditional architectonic styles, and walkable spaces.

The film *Our Town* describes the turn of the century in the small town of Grover Corners. The story revolves around two families: Doc Gibbs, his wife Julie, son George and daughter Rebecca, who live next door to Charlie Webb, his wife and daughter Emily and son Wally. At the opening of *Our Town*, we see Morgan, the town's druggist, who is also the

narrator of the story. He is located on a gentle hill from where introduces the town and its people. The town is suggested from the distance, like a small village of low-rise houses, dimly lit by streetlamps. Morgan comments, “Running right through the middle of the town is Main Street.” This film is the only one of this category that suggests a sort of high-angle camera. Unlike the aerial views to represent big cities such as New York, small town films are always shown from the inside and from medium-camera shots. This kind of frame composition always situates the characters and the space in a human scale, where buildings, exterior spaces and nature are articulated in harmonic relationships.

Main Street can be identified as a distinct American place. The geographer Richard Francaviglia analyzes the role that various main streets play in real communities, as well as, the influence of artificial main streets in literature, film, and historical-theme park recreations. Francaviglia notes that Main Street becomes an icon tied to small towns and they are strongly associated with nostalgia for small town life:

Main Street became the commercial and social heart of the American small town; as it developed in our collective thought, Main Street became an integral part of American culture. Because many people left small towns in the early to mid-twentieth century, these places became repositories of memories.⁶⁷

Paradoxically, *Our Town* shows mainly houses and residential streets and Main Street is vaguely suggested in the distance, at the opening of the film, or behind large trees, or through a brief close camera shot of the drugstore, which presents a Victorian-style facade.

In the film *It's a Wonderful Life*, Main Street is shown at various time periods: first in 1919, then in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and finally in 1945, when it appears as “Portersville,” an urbanized version of the town, which is presented as a bad dream of the future. The drugstore where George Bailey works, when he is a young boy, is located on Main Street. On Main Street is also the business office of his family, and it is the place where he encounters friends and neighbors. Main Street is also portrayed in films such as *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, where Trudy and her sister walk and discuss about the future, and where Trudy and Norval decide to get married after Trudy realizes that she is pregnant and she does not know who her baby's father is. In *The Magic Town*, Rap Smith realizes that the life of the town is peaceful and pleasant while walking down Main Street. In *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, Andy and his family walk together on Main Street, meanwhile Andy dreams about girls looking at the windows of the stores. In *Return to Peyton Place*, Main Street is the place where Allison goes to the post, and removes the letter announcing the publication of her novel. We see her jumping for joy in Main Street (see Figure 95 for the representation of Main Street in small towns).

Main Street in small towns is a safe, peaceful and friendly environment, which forms part of the daily life of its inhabitants. Even if the scene is at night, Main Street is not presented as a dangerous place, but a place of identity and memory, which invites interpersonal relationships. In terms of architecture, Main Street is a well delimited space, commonly represented as a continuous space framed by buildings of one or two stories, built in traditional style (never in modernist style), with little squares or open spaces that articulate its route, and sometimes, it is represented with trees lining a central flow.



Our Town, 1940



The Magnificent Ambersons, 1942



The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 1944



It's a Wonderful Life, 1946



Love Laughs at Andy Hardy, 1946



The Stranger, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



Return to Peyton Place, 1961

Figure 95. Main Street in Small Town Films

At the opening of *Our Town*, Morgan makes a detailed description of the layout of the town, including the civic and communitarian facilities:

Running right through the middle of the town is Main Street. Cutting across Main Street on the left are the railroad tracks. Beyond the railroad tracks is Polish town; you know, foreign folks who come here to work in the mills, a couple of Canuck families, and the Catholic Church. You can see the steeple of the Congregational

church; the Presbyterian is just across the street. The Methodist and the Unitarian are up a block. The Baptist church is down in the hollow, by the river. Next to the post office is the town hall and jail is in the basement.

The number of religious institutions in this small town and the number of Republicans within its inhabitants (the narrator will inform us later that the town is 86 percent Republican), illustrates the emphasis on traditional and conservative values. This emphasis is also seen in the inclusion of the church, where George Gibbs and Emily Webb celebrate their wedding. This sequence is central and one of the few non-residential buildings we see in the film. The church is also the place where ladies belonging to the choir meet to practice, socialize and gossip. Churches are also present in films such as *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, where Andy meets the beautiful niece of the Minister; *The Magic Town*, where Rip Smith socializes with the community of the town; at the opening shots of *All the Heaven Allows*, and at the open sequences of *Return to Payton Place*. In these two films, the inclusion of the church serves to represent the conservative approach of the community.

In the comedy *Send Me No Flowers*, which portrays a married George and Judy living in a suburban neighborhood, the hypochondriac George is convinced he is going to die from a terminal illness, and creates a detailed plan to get a new husband for Judy. George goes to a real estate agent to buy a new home located in a traditional suburban community, and we see a model of the community where the only public building is the church. In the film *The Stranger*, a criminal seeks refuge in a small town to evade his past. The presence of the church articulates most of the long-angle camera shots that portray the town, and it is

right there, in the church, where the criminal dies and pay for his sins (see Figure 96 to illustrate the inclusion of churches in American small communities).



Our Town, 1940



Hail the Conquering Hero, 1944



The Stranger, 1946



Love Loughs at Andy Hardy, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



All That Heaven Allows, 1955



Return to Payton Place, 1961



Send Me No Flowers, 1964

Figure 96. Churches in Small Town Films

In the small towns of the examined films, the drugstore is one of the recurrent places where part of the story runs; it is represented as a social space that congregates children and adults together. As Nezar AlSayyad notes, it is a safe, socially acceptable place for boys and girls to meet and thus be initiated into the social rituals of courtship and dating.⁶⁸

In *It's a Wonderful Life*, the drugstore is the place where Mary and Violet first compete for the attention of George Bailey; and in *Our Town*, it is where George Gibbs and Emily Webb discuss their future. In *The Magic Town*, the drugstore is the place where Rip Smith tries to get the attention of Mary. In numerous films of Andy Hardy, it is the place where Andy enjoys his dates with girlfriends (see Figure 97 for the representation of drugstores in films).

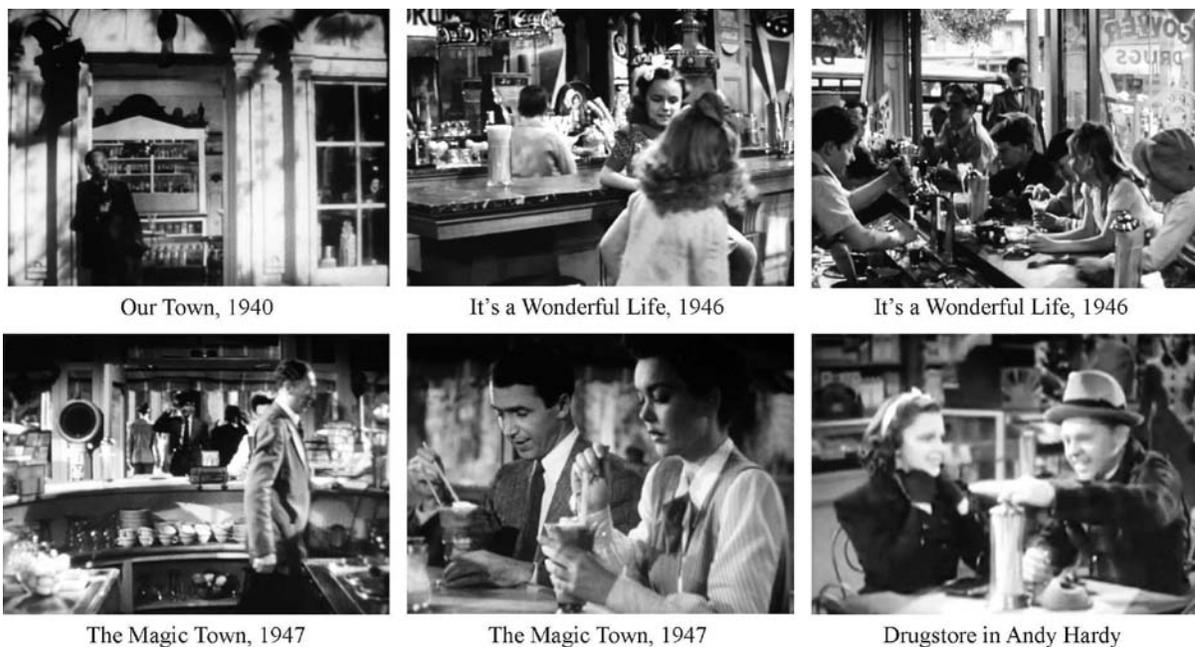


Figure 97. The Drugstore in Small Town Films

The institutions that serve as meeting places for its inhabitants also represent the town's sense of community. In *The Magic Town*, the school is shown as a healthy and friendly environment, which is in direct contact with nature. This place organizes activities, not only for the students, but for their families and the community as a whole. In *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy* and in *It's a Wonderful Life*, the school is the place where the youth

organize their parties, which are closely supervised by adults, parents and teachers. As the drugstore, the youth's parties in these small towns are safe environments for courtship and dating. In the same way, the Country Club and the Social Club are represented in films, such as *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Magic Town*, and *All that Heaven Allows*. Only in this last film, which sees the small town as a strong conservative community, the social club appears as an exclusive space (see Figure 98).



The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 1944



Love Laughs at Andy Hardy, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



The Magic Town, 1947



All That Heaven Allows, 1955

Figure 98. Social Activities in Small Town Films

Democratic participation and cooperative collaboration are presented as the healthiest communitarian practice to solve their problems. In *The Magic Town*, the City Hall is the instance where the community comes together to discuss the future civic center's project for the town. This project is presented by Mary Peterman, a young woman who wishes to carry

out the dream of her father, a model citizen who was the owner of the local newspaper. In order to convince the community council, Mary explains the plan through blueprints and schemas, but Rip Smith, who wants to do a survey of the town (as it has remained until now), improvises a convincing discourse: “To me (the town) is a dream of a lifetime, and I want to become a part of that. Please don’t change it.” When finally Rip realizes that the town is the place where he wants to settle down and raise a family, he encourages the town inhabitants to recover their old ideals and work together in order to convert this community to an exemplary place. At the final sequence of the film, we see the community meeting with all their representatives, including young people who present the decisive arguments to support the construction of the new civic center: they do not want to leave the town to continue their education, they want to stay close to family and friends, and like Rip, they want to build their future there.

In *It’s a Wonderful Life*, thanks to communitarian collaboration, George Bailey and the town can solve their problems. In the final sequence, the bank examiner and policemen are waiting to arrest him, after his company lost the money. Just then, Uncle Billy and a flood of townspeople arrive, with enough donations to save George and the construction of the new houses. George finds a gift from the Angel Clarence, which is a copy of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* with the inscription: “Dear George: Remember no man is a failure who has friends.”

Nearly 15 years later, the film *Return to Peyton Place* presents a more critical view of the small town, but it still presenting the democratic practices and community agreements as the most appropriate way to resolve town’s problems. When Allison’s novel is published,

many townspeople are outraged, particularly Roberta Carter. Mike Rossi, the school principal, is fired because he refuses to remove the controversial novel from the school library. A town meeting is called to discuss Rossi's defense, but several people, who in the past had not expressed their opinions openly, denounce the hypocrisy of Roberta. At the end, all voted in favor of keeping the book in the school library, but a man says that he is against it. When the community asks him why, he responds that he is actually in favor, but only to vote against the meeting to show their democratic practices.

The sense of communitarian life is also represented through the kind of public space and urban configuration of the towns. The distance between the main street, the school, or the church from the houses, is represented as walkable spaces where the community meets. This face-to-face interaction is portrayed in *The Magic Town*, when Rip Smith arrives for first time to the town. He and his partner walk down into a residential street, and a local gentleman encounters them and initiates a friendly conversation in order to find out who they are and what are they doing there. Neighborhoods are systematically portrayed as quiet streets, surrounded by single-family homes with large trees, which together with the private gardens, create a landscape where nature prevails over built spaces (see Figure 99).

The community's conservative values are also represented through the architectonic style of families' homes; houses and buildings are conceived with traditional styles, and the modern style seems to be reserved only for buildings located in the metropolis. This sense of conservatism and emphasis on tradition is also portrayed through the historical periods represented in the films. *Our Town*, *Kings Row*, and *It's a Wonderful Life*, start in the turn of the century, while *Meet Me in St. Louis* the whole story runs in this same epoch. The moral

values are represented, as well as with the emphasis on family. Families seem to be the center of the small-town communities: The Hardys, the Webbs and the Gibbs in *Our Town*; the Smiths in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, the Kockenlockers in *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, and the Baileys in *It's a Wonderful Life*.



Our Town, 1940



Kings Row, 1942



The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 1944



It's a Wonderful Life, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



All That Heaven Allows, 1955



Return to Peyton Place, 1961

Figure 99. Neighborhoods in Small Town Films

The family-centered values are also represented through the emphasis on domestic architecture. In all films, houses are single-family homes with gardens and porches, placed in

streets with big and leafy trees. In *Meet Me in St. Louis*, like in *Our Town*, and *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy*, there is a strong focus on domestic spaces and the workplace is invisible. The predominantly residential sets are present as well as, in *Kings Row*, which describes the life of five children. Louise is the daughter of the town physician Dr. Henry Gordon, which his workplace is located at his home; when Parris grows up and comes back to the town after he studies medicine in Vienna, he also installs his office at the house.

In both *Kings Row* and *It's a Wonderful Life*, the protagonist's activity is related to the construction of new housing. In *Kings Row*, when Parris is in Vienna, Drake's trust fund is stolen by a dishonest bank official. He is forced to work for the railroad and is accidentally crushed by a boxcar. The sadistic Dr. Gordon amputates both of his legs needlessly, and Drake after spending a period of great depression, finally starts a business building houses for working families, thanks to Parris' financial help. We see the plan of the new neighborhood represented by single sites lined into curves streets, as well as, we realize that the new houses are suburbs built in the countryside. The headlines of the signboard, which promotes the new neighborhood, suggest "Watch them grow," and like in *The Magic Town*, the offspring of the town's families will have a place to live near their own people (see Figure 100).



Kings Row, 1942

Figure 100. New Suburbs in *Kings Row*

In *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey has spent his life in the small town Bedford Falls. George's modest building and loan company, which was founded by his father, has built houses for the town's inhabitants, promoting the suburban ideal of home ownership, in order to make housing affordable for everybody in the town, and maintain a communitarian spirit of "common people." George has always prevented rich skinflint and capitalist Mr. Potter from taking over the entire town and transforms the peaceful life of the place into a commercialized and superfluous world. We see both, Bailey Park, which is the neighborhood built by Georges' company, and Pottersville, the visualization of how the town would be if Georges had not been born. The problems start when Uncle Billy loses the people's money and the family company cannot fulfill the contracts. The desperate George attempts to commit suicide, but an angel stops him and shows Pottersville. Pottersville is portrayed as an impersonal and commercial city, an urbanized world full of non-productive excess: neon light advertisements, night clubs, nudity and vice. The relationships between the city's inhabitants are now impersonal and unfriendly; people who used to be nice become selfish and aggressive. Here, the connection between spatial features of the city and the behavior of its inhabitants is evident (see Figure 101 to illustrate Bailey Park and Pottersville).

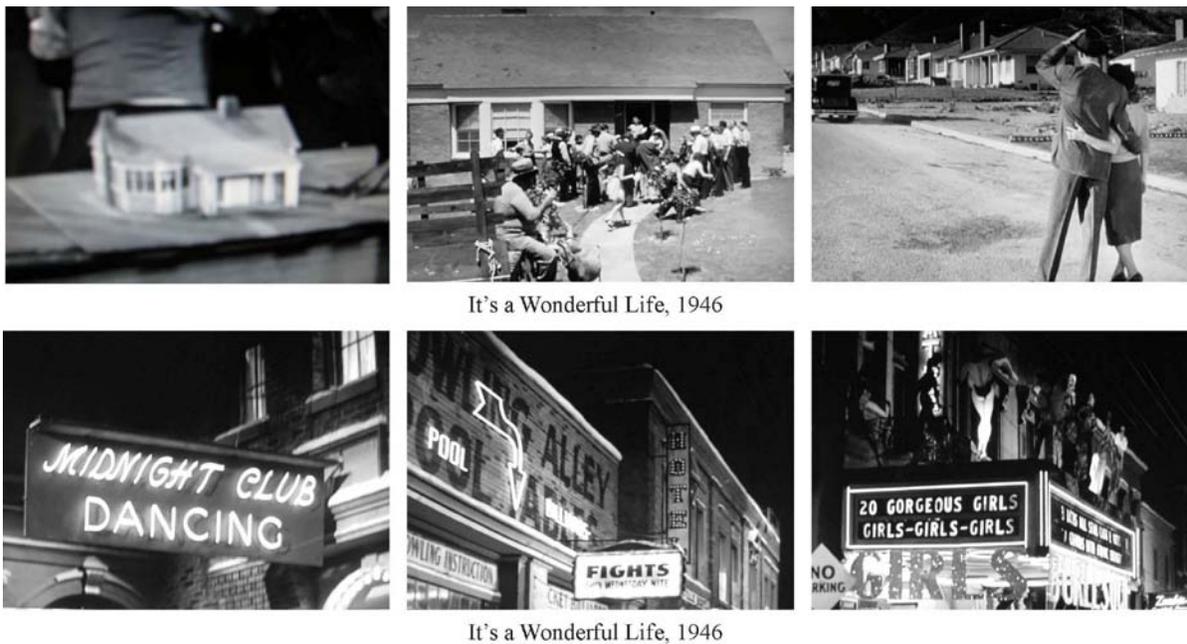


Figure 101. Bailey Park and Pottersville in *It's a Wonderful Life*

Bailey Park and Pottersville can illustrate Ferdinand Toennies' notion of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. As Frank Krutnik notes, the folk community of Bedford Falls and the suburban Bailey Park resemble the pastoral ideal, as well as, “a realm of localized Americanism protected from the pestilence of urbanity, and the corrupted city of strangers.”⁶⁹

The dichotomy between small communities and big cities is also portrayed in films such as *Our Daily Bread*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, and *The Magic Town*. These films present clear links between small communities and enduring values such as family, honesty and collaborative associations. In contrast, these films link the metropolis with selfish and materialistic values, sexual temptations, or at least, a too troubled lifestyle that is not suitable for a family life.

In *Our Daily Bread*, a young couple John and Mary Sims live in New York City, but the crisis of the Great Depression and the lack of available jobs convince them to move to the countryside. As they know nothing about farming, Mary and John decide to welcome other families, just as they left the city and went to the countryside searching for better opportunities. The new collaborative community starts to work the land, and finally they get to drive the water to irrigate the fields and see how their efforts pay-off. This film not only portrays the idea of returning to the land, strongly promoted by Roosevelt's New Deal; it also portrays the big city as a corrupted and at the same time, a seductive temptation. Sally, a city dweller and platinum blonde, who wears black and has a doubtful past, arrives to the farm during a rainstorm. When she realizes that her drunken male companion has just died, accepts Mary's offer to stay. Sally begins to flirt with John and convinces him to leave the farm and go to the metropolis, but when they are driving towards the city, John decides to come back and encourages his dispirited fellows to work together.

In *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, Longfellow Deeds is an innocent and good young man who lives in a small town called Mandrake Falls, Vermont, where he is well appreciated by the community. He has to move to New York City when he becomes a multimillionaire, but immediately he encounters conflict in the impersonal and malicious environment of the city. He is accused of insanity and judged when he tries to give away his wealth. Finally and thanks to a convincing argument to the members of the jury, he can maintain his integrity.

The Magic Town embodies the dichotomy between small towns and big cities, but it also illustrates the emergence of the new science of public opinion polling as a way to study tastes, interests and tendencies of population. The film opens with high-angle camera of

Manhattan, where Rip Smith works in the business of public opinion. He aims to discover towns where citizens' opinions perfectly mirror those of the American people as a whole. When he finally finds the ideal town, he sets up an undercover operation there. Over time, he gets involved with town inhabitants, and falls in love with a local young lady, Mary, who has the community's best interests at heart. The true nature of Smith's operation is revealed at the same time the town is portrayed as the best community for living. Because of the publicity, the town is invaded by big city individuals, who want to know everything about the tastes of the inhabitants. The peaceful life of the town shifts to a convulsed environment, full of traffic and improvised commerce. The problems continue when the polling's answers of the town's inhabitants reflect unthinkable opinions, such as majority of them agree with the idea of a woman president for the United States, revealing at the same time, the conservative approach of the film (see Figure 102 to illustrate the dichotomy between the small town and the convulsed town when people of the city invade the town).



Figure 102. The Town's Invasion by City People in *The Magic Town*

From the sample of American films that the story takes place in small communities, these communities portray moral values such as honesty, mutual collaboration, and democratic practices, with special emphasis in family and conservative values. When city people decide to marry, raise a family or guide their lives by moral values, they always opt for small communities, such as choosing the most favorable places to consolidate these values.

Small communities are placed close to nature; its physical boundaries tend to dissolve into the countryside; and they possess clear urban “images” that configure the symbolic spaces of the town, such as Main Street, the square, the school, the church, social and communitarian clubs, and the drugstore. These spaces create bonds of identity and memory between the inhabitants; they are safe spaces that invite face-to-face interactions, and they permit, in opposition to the metropolis, establish enduring relationships and restore the

traditional sense of humanity (see Figure 103 to illustrate the close connection between small communities and countryside).



Our Town, 1940



kings Row, 1942



It,s a Wonderful Life, 1946



The Magic Town, 1947



All That Heaven Allows, 1955

Figure 103. Small Town Films and their Open Boundaries to the Countryside

Discourse of the English Neighborhood: Urban Spaces, Gardens, Pubs and Funfairs

The British architectural writer, James Maude Richards, first published the book *The Castles on the Ground* in 1946, which was re-edited in 1973. In the book, Richards explains that the English suburb is the prime example of a style of environment largely created by its inhabitants.⁷⁰ In the Chapter entitled “The Englishman’s Home,” Richards argues that the garden is an integral part of the English suburban residence, which “stand trim and lovingly cared for in the mild sunshine.”⁷¹ The suburban house, each one with its own garden is according to Richards “the Englishman’s idea of his own home, except for the cosmopolitan rich, a minority of freaks and intellectuals, and the very poor.”⁷²

Katherine Shonfield argues that the post-war Britain and London in particular, was a hybrid world, which there were simultaneous longings; one the one hand, the desire for radical changes, and on the other hand, the aspiration of tangible continuity.⁷³ The functionalist principles of the Modern Movement in architecture, established the rules for the new buildings developed between the second-half of the 1930s and the 1940s, as we discuss in the projects of social housing portrayed in British documentaries. The Modern Movement aspired to achieve a real social change and a complete transformation of the urban space. However, after the war and as a response to the anxieties of the population after its cities were heavily destroyed, a strong trend toward the recovery of cultural traditions seems to have emerged. In terms of architecture, this attitude is reflected on a revival approach to traditional images of English houses, which despite being built with new construction techniques, their aesthetic was closer to the ideals proposed by the Arts and Crafts Movement. In this context, Richards’ book reflects this trend, especially when he argues that

the suburban is the choice of people who know what they like, and modern architecture “has somehow never found the common touch.”⁷⁴

From the examined 1940s’ British films in this study, the tendency to represent common middle-class families is strongly linked to the representation of neighborhoods with townhouses. Films such as *Million Like Us*, *This Happy Breed*, *It Always Rains on Sunday*, and *London Belongs to Me*, use clear depictions of the neighborhoods where these families inhabit. Although the films have different approaches to represent the image of the middle-class family, all these families live in neighborhoods with traditional townhouses (see Figure 104).



Million Like Us, 1943



This Happy Breed, 1944



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947



London Belongs to Me, 1948

Figure 104. British’s Neighborhoods in 1940s Films

These films range from family dramas and film noir to a hybrid between drama and war films in the case of *Million Like Us*. With an optimistic and propagandistic approach, *Millions Like Us* describes the story of Celia Crowson, her two sisters and her father during the war. The film aims to portray the role of women struggling to reconcile their romantic aspirations with the necessities of an emergency economy, which require their sacrifices and compromises to overcome the war period. The film opens with a train station full of people and a narrator comments, “Remember the summer before the war.” Then we can see an aerial view of an overcrowded beach, and the next sequence informs us that the family is preparing to go on vacation. We see the car parked outside the house and the neighborhood street, which is made up of two storey townhouses, all the same, forming a continuous facade line of low height (see Figure 105).



Million Like Us, 1943

Figure 105. Opening Sequences in *Million Like Us*

With a similar optimistic approach, *This Happy Breed* portrays an idealized middle-class family describing how they lived between the wars. The story begins just after World War I, when the Gibbons move to a townhouse in the suburbs. The opening of the film uses a high-angle camera to show the city of London, with the river and the bridge. In the next shot,

we see with a semi-high angle camera, a suburban neighborhood's street with townhouses. In the next shot, we can see closer, the backyards of these houses, and then the camera moves to one house, zooms to a window, and the next sequence describes the interior spaces of an empty house, which their inhabitants are coming back (see Figure 106).

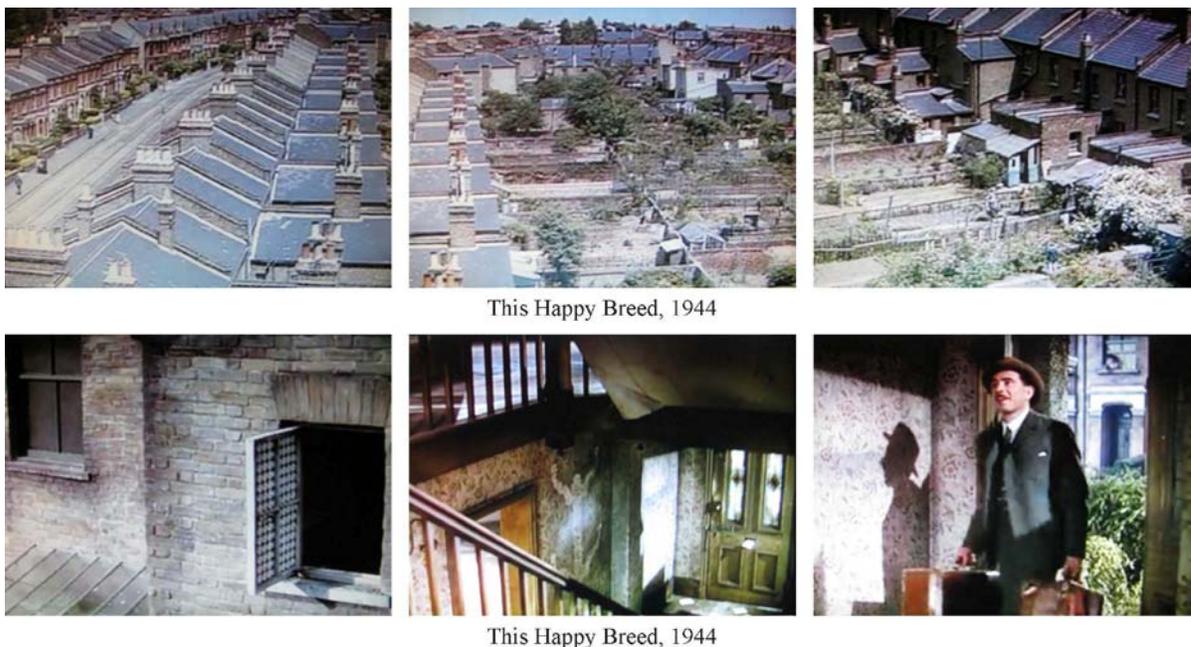


Figure 106. Opening Sequence in *This Happy Breed*

It Always Rains on Sunday portrays a rainy Sunday of Rose's life, a married woman with teenage children, who lives in a London neighborhood at East End. When Rose was young, she was engaged to local Tommy Swann, who went to jail and ruined Rose's plans to marry him. Tommy escapes from prison and comes to see Rose to get help to flee the country. The film opens with a shot of Rose's neighborhood; this same shot will be repeated in different times of the day, and it will serve to link the next sequence with the domestic life of the family (see Figure 107).

With an unsentimental approach, the film not only portrays a criminal, it also represents the everyday life in England after the war, portraying through Rose, a frustrated housewife, exploring the boredom and anxiety that causes a life of austerity and sacrifice.



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947

Figure 107. Neighborhood's Street in *It Always Rains on Sunday*

London Belongs to Me opens with aerial shots of London, showing the river and the bridge with high-angle camera. Then we see the name of Dulcimer Street, and the next shot shows a street with traditional brick townhouses. A narrator comments that in 1839, this

neighborhood was a very exclusive one, but now the rooms of these houses are rented to different families, or furnished rooms are rented to single people. The camera zooms to one particular house and moves to show different windows, where we see the domestic spaces of the apartments (see Figure 108). The narrator describes each family, and informs us about Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and their daughter Doris; Mrs. Bloom and her son Percy; and Connie, a single woman of certain age. The story revolves around the inhabitants of the house, especially around the young Percy, who is involved in a car theft, and unintentionally he involves a girl who suffers an accident in the car. Despite their differences, the neighbors are organized to help each other, working as a supportive community.



London Belongs to Me, 1948

Figure 108. Opening Sequence in *London Belongs to Me*

All these films are about families, and all speak about the sacrifices of common people. The urban space depiction in these films illustrates a very particular urban pattern. The townhouse model creates a built mass of aligned houses of two storeys, which form a sort of continuous row that creates a clear delimitation of the street space. The open space is in the backyard, and as each house has its own backyard, the backs of the gardens in turn limited with other gardens, and the grid of open space and built space is clear and

geometrical. This urban model, which is based on low-rise houses with gardens, is denser than the American neighborhood, discussed previously. The American neighborhood portrayed in the examined films locates single-family houses at the center of the site, leaving a large front garden with trees, which filters the movement of the street. The American residential street is less urban than the British one, and its design is inspired in the image of the park. On the other hand, the British neighborhood possesses an urban image, although it is located in a suburban area. The difference between the townhouses of *It Always Rains on Sunday* and *London Belongs to Me*; with the townhouses of *Million Like Us* and *This Happy Breed*, is that the two last films portray suburban townhouses and the first ones portray neighborhoods located in the inner city. This difference is expressed primarily through the garden: suburban houses have gardens, which within the British culture, is one of the most valued aspects.

Richards argues that the Englishman's passion for gardening may be seen in other places than suburbia, but only suburbia, is where an Englishman can exercise his passion. "He creates for himself an original world in which nothing is not subject to his determination and control."⁷⁵

This Englishman's passion for gardens is largely represented in British films. In *The Demi Paradise*, the Russian engineer Ivan visits Britain looking for the development of a ship prototype's piece that he had designed. He meets a rich and influential old man who is the owner of a ship industry, and starts a friendly relationship with his family. The ship owner's son, and head of the commercial downtown office, takes the day off and Ivan decides to meet him at his residence. When Ivan finds him and asks why he takes the day off,

the commercial office's head responds, "Because I'll spend all the day working in the garden." This film, which intends to portray the typical British spirit, reiterates the importance that British people give to gardening. The same character later explains to Ivan that if he decides to retire it is only to work in the garden. When Ivan is trying to identify the things that most English people like, the family explains that there are the fields and the gardens. In *This Happy Breed*, the idealized middle-class family portrayed in the film, actively participate in the community and they sacrifice themselves in war times, but also they cultivate their family's relationships, as well as, they cultivate the garden, which is presented as an important part of their lifestyle.

In the British documentary *Homes for Workers*, at the final sequences, the architect Keay describes the various projects realized by Liverpool Housing authorities, and he finishes commenting, "older citizens are happier and more confident in the last years of their lives," and we see an old couple working in the garden. In the first sequence of *Million Like Us*, we see the Crowson's family home when they are preparing to go on vacation. From an open door, we can appreciate a little glass house and a backyard garden; and in *This Happy Breed*, the glass house and the garden appears in many sequences. In *The Card*, houses of middle-or upper-class people are always portrayed with beautiful gardens. In *Look Back in Anger*, the landscape of the film is predominantly urban; Jimmy and his middle-class wife Alison live in the attic of a rented house. After the couple has problems and decide to separate, we see Alison in her parents' home, resting in a quiet garden. The film *A Taste of Honey* never shows a garden, but the picture of a cottage with garden is the reason, because Jo's mother Helen decides to marry to improve her life conditions. In *Darling*, the house with

garden illustrates the middle-class home of Diana's parents, as well as, illustrates the house where Robert lived with his wife and children before he decided to abandon them to live with Diana (see Figure 109 for the representation of gardens in British films).



Homes for Workers, 1939



Million Like Us, 1943



The Semi Paradise, 1943



This Happy Breed 1944



The Card, 1952



Look Back in Anger, 1958



A Taste of Honey, 1961



Darling, 1965

Figure 109. Gardens in British Films

The 1940s films *Million Like Us*, *This Happy Breed* and *London Belongs to Me*, represent well incorporated families, despite the disadvantages, they face problems with a positive spirit. These families also collaborate with the community. In *Million Like Us*,

Celia's sister Phyllis joins the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and Celia works in a munitions factory. In *This Happy Breed*, during the General Strike of 1926, Frank Gibbons and his neighbor Bob work as volunteer driver and conductor of a London bus. In *London Belongs to Me*, when Percy is arrested after the accident of a girl, Mr. Johnson decides to invest all his savings in a lawyer to defend Percy. Also, the building community organizes a document signed by hundreds of people, who march through the streets to the courts, in sympathy with Percy.

While gardens are an important value in the middle-class British family, townhouses are the main model used to depict their lifestyle. As we see, neighborhoods with townhouses possess a clear urban image; families are framed in residential neighborhoods separated to commercial and industrial zones. As Main Street, the church and the social club function as places of identity in American films, British films use the residential street, the street market, the pub and the funfair as their places of identity.

The funfair is a safe place for family distraction. In *Love in a Dole*, the younger brother Harry, despite his modest means, spends a weekend with his girlfriend in Blackpool, in a funfair. In *Million Like Us*, during vacation the Crowson's family go to a funfair. Funfairs appear also in *The Card*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *A Taste of Honey*, and in *Brighton Rock*, a man is killed in a funfair. In *London Belongs to Me*, Percy works in a car garage, just next door to an entertainment venue (see Figure 110).

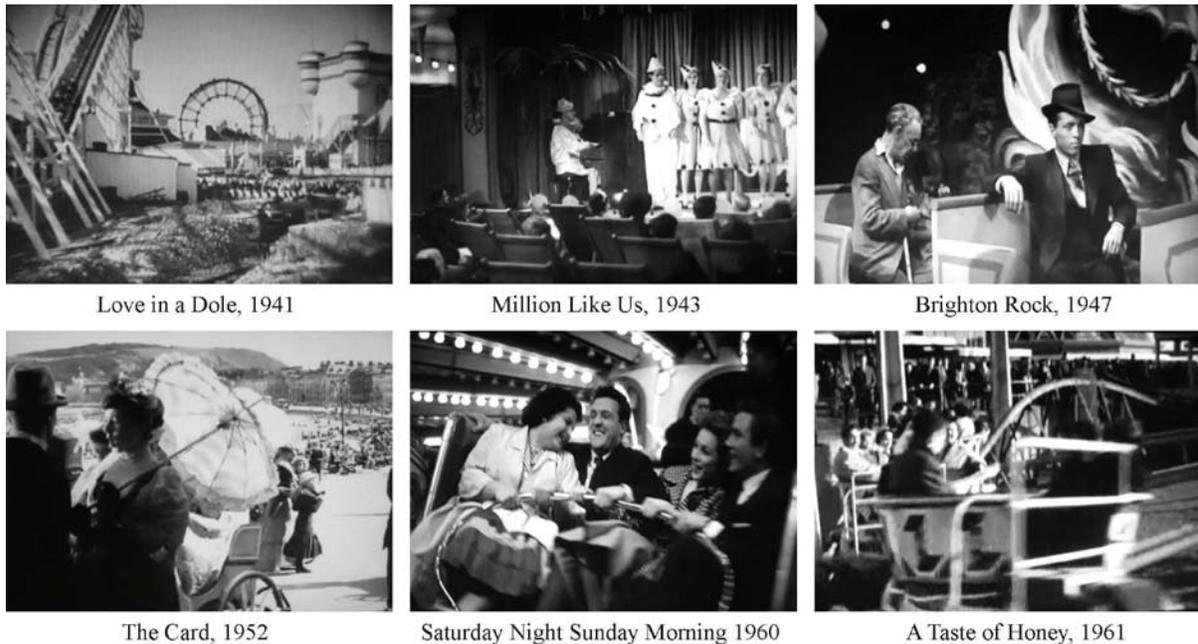


Figure 110. Funfairs in British Films

Like funfairs, British adults of the examined films find diversion without guilt in pubs. Pubs are common places to common people, and this approach is contrasted with the conservatism of American small communities, which see entertainment venues and alcohol as vicious behaviors, as we see in Porterville's portrayal in the film *It's a Wonderful Life*. In British films even Frank Gibbons, the responsible father of *This Happy Breed*, goes home drunk one night. In this sense the middle-class family does not see the city as a place where they cannot live; the city is for them a natural and historical place to enjoy. The British discourse does not condemn the city per se, but the slums of the nineteenth century industrial city, and the common family appraises traditional neighborhoods, as well as, gardens, street markets, and any sort of public spaces, where they find cultural traditions and public identity.

Cozy Spaces, Kitchens and Bedrooms

In Hollywood films, the rooms of single-family houses are cozy domestic environments rather than luxurious spaces. Elegant settings were mainly used to portray hotels, offices, ballrooms, and settings created for musicals. As Christina Wilson points out, Cedric Gibbons headed the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's art department and gained unparalleled recognition as one of the most influential designers during the Golden Age of film industry.⁷⁶ Gibbons was responsible to create elegant settings that attracted audiences to MGM films, getting eleven Academy Awards between 1930 and 1957.⁷⁷ Although his repertoire was varied, he was particularly renowned for introducing modern design to Hollywood films. Gibbons' use of the term *modern* suggests not the Modern Movement promoted by the Bauhaus and other European architects, but the decoration's style inspired on the *Art Deco*. Dramas such as *Grand Hotel* and *The Women* were made during the Great Depression; the strategy that MGM studio used in order to create escapist dream worlds for audiences that desperately needed them was the combination of stars, sentimental stories and elegant settings.⁷⁸

In *The Women*, the settings range from cozy domestic environments to luxurious spaces, such as the beauty store. The domestic interiors created by Gibbons became models that female moviegoers could attempt to approximate in their own homes.⁷⁹ The country house of *The Women* shows an environment that the magazine *House Beautiful* described as "Hollywood Provincial," and recommended as a modern prototype, because it "makes such a friendly home" and represented the "American ideal of good living."⁸⁰ (See Figure 111)



The Women, 1939

Figure 111. “Hollywood Provincial” Style in *The Women*

Joseph Rosa notes that Deco design never really challenged the supremacy of America’s historically based housing styles.⁸¹ Hollywood films have both reflected and shaped American views about modern domestic design, and most of Americans have never had a desire to “start from zero,” at least not in terms of architecture; American domestic architecture communicates an essential conservatism.⁸² A proof of this aesthetic conservatism is that from a sample of 58 American fiction films, there are not any films that portray modernist houses, with the exception of *The Fountainhead*, where modernist houses are shown through drawings and models designed by the protagonist of the film.

Rooms where the family met, such as the living or family room, the dining room, with special emphasis in the kitchen, are the prevalent domestic spaces shown in American and British films. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, the kitchen is the place for women; and in American films, the upper-class families share the kitchen space with the maid, who is usually Afro-American.

The separation between gender roles, which defines male as provider and women as housewife and mother, is clearly represented in the films of the studied period. From the examined films, women who appear as having a paid job before the 1960s are Connie

Milligan in *The More the Merrier*, the judge Margaret Turner in *The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer*, Mary Peterman in *The Magic Town*, and Lora Meredith in *Imitation of Life*. In the British *Million Like Us*, Celia Crowson appears having a job in a munitions factory, which is shown as a heroic sacrifice for the country in wartime. This film intends to convince the feminine audience that this sacrifice is worth it, by portraying Celia's romantic story, which finds love within the soldiers. Even though her husband dies in combat, Celia is presented as an example of integrity and courage, and as the female model that the country needs. In *London Belongs to Me*, Connie, the single woman of certain age that rents one of the apartments, appears having little jobs as the only way to survive, but the comical portrayal of this character, tends to minimize her problems.

The representation of the kitchen in American films portrays the heart of the family and the heart of the housewife. Even though this room changed its representation between the 1930s and the 1960s, its symbolic value transcends a mere functionalist approach, such as the case with the functionalist Frankfurt kitchen discussed in the previous chapter, which promoted a hygienic factory to prepare meals, based on technology, new materials, and minimal surfaces. We can see an American version of this modernist and functionalist approach in the documentary *The Monsanto House of the Future*. The Monsanto House was a fiberglass prototype exhibited at Disneyland, California, from 1957 to 1967. During the 1950s, the housing demands for families, who wanted to move to the suburbs, was more than the available supply. Monsanto Chemical was looking for new markets for its plastic products, and seeing a business opportunity, the company sponsored research at MIT to design a low-cost, prefabricated house that would be made almost entirely of plastics.

Despite the millions of visitors, Monsato house was never built on a massive scale. Monsato's kitchen offered a minimum space and revolutionary technological advances, such as microwaves, dishwashers, and new forms for food storage and kitchen tools. But the American kitchen, while incorporating new technology, has always maintained an image close to the traditional kitchen of the early twentieth century (see Figure 112 to illustrate Monsato House and Figure 113 to illustrate the representation of the kitchen in American films).



The Monsato House of the Future, 1957

Figure 112. *Monsato House of the Future* Documentary

American kitchens are cozy spaces, where family has breakfast and dinner together; with feminine touches such as window treatments, collections of ceramic teapots, pots with plants, and so on; that serve to represent well-established families, caring parents, happy marriages, and healthy environments (see Figure 113).



Wild Boys of the Road, 1933



Dark Victory, 1939



Our Town, 1940



Love Laughs at Andy Hardy, 1944



Meet Me in St. Louis, 1944



All that Heaven Allows, 1955



Imitation of Life, 1959



Don't Eat the Daisies, 1960

Figure 113. Kitchens in American Films

From the sample of examined films, married male characters inhabit kitchen spaces to have their meals, but they do not appear doing housework. The exception is Christopher Cross in *Scarlet Street*. In this film Chris portrays an oppressed husband, married with Adele, a dominant and stand-offish woman, who refuses to assume the role of housewife. As a way to emphasize that removing the dishes from the table and washing them are unusual activities for males, Chris appears wearing a ridiculous flowered apron.

This Happy Breed shows a simple, no-luxury kitchen, which does not intend to be the heart of the family, but a functional space. This place does not play a relevant role in the story. However, in *It Always Rains on Sunday*, the kitchen functions as portrayal of Rose's life. Its extremely austere appearance and reduced size, represents both, the loneliness and boring life of Rose, and the oppressive and suffocating presence of the family, when they share the space (see Figure 114).



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947

Figure 114. The Kitchen in *It Always Rains on Sunday*

The kitchen seems to represent an American dream rather than a British one, and it can be explained by the consumer society, which found in the housewife the target to distribute products as benefits for the home and the family. During the 1920s, the United States became a consumer society. Americans in the 1920s were the first to play electric phonographs, to listen to commercial radio broadcasts, and to use electric vacuum cleaners. In the same way, alongside the automobile, the telephone and electricity also became emblems of the consumer economy. By 1930, two-thirds of all American homes had electricity, and the electric appliances industry found the way to quickly sell refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and toasters. Far from liberating women, appliances

imposed new standards of cleanliness. The house had to be vacuumed daily and sheets had to be changed weekly. The biopolitical discourse arguing that the health of the children and family was reflected in the house's cleanliness, helped to convert the American housewife and mother as a sort of home slave. As a form to remedy this condition, the kitchen as the symbolic representation of the women's domain, starts to be a cult object, beyond its functionality, it had to possess the same aesthetic attributes and size than the other family spaces. It started to be integrated with the dining and family room, and it became the main meeting place for the family.

The conservative approach of American films is not only reflected in their aesthetic tastes, but also on the misrepresentation of the bedroom. The bedroom is shown in exceptional cases, and in films before the 1960s, it is never related with sexual behaviors. For example in the comedies *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House*, and *Father's Little Dividend*, the bedroom is shown, but the couple sleeps in separate beds. In the comedy *Send Me No Flowers*, the married couple sleeps in one bed, but the bed is only shown where the husband is sick and his wife is caring for him. The American *The More the Merrier* illustrates through the bedroom space how sex and marriage had to be always linked. This romantic comedy, which makes fun of the housing shortage in Washington DC, portrays Benjamin Dingle, an old and respectable gentleman, who goes to the city as an adviser on the housing shortage. After he realizes his hotel room will not be available for two days, Benjamin tries to rent a room. Connie Milligan, a young single and working woman, believing in her patriotic duty, decides to share her two bedroom apartment with other female, but after the insistence of Benjamin, she accepts to rent to him the room. The

problems start when Benjamin decides to share his bedroom with Sergeant Joe Carter without asking Connie, and she is forced to accept Benjamin's arrangement, because she has already spent the rent money. Although Connie is engaged with Charles, she does not tell him about her roommates. The situation becomes complicated when a misunderstanding occurs, and Joe is charged on suspicion of espionage. Connie has to declare, and recognize that she shares her apartment with a young and attractive man. To avoid the scandal, Benjamin advises the young couple to get married. The final sequence shows how the wall, which before divided Connie's bedroom with Joe's bedroom, was demolished and the married couple can now share the same roof without any guilt.

From the sample of American films examined in this study, the only cases that show bedrooms are when feminine characters are waking up, making up for a party, or simply talking, such as in *The Women*, *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, and *The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer*. In all cases, we see cozy and feminine beds with canopy, gauzy curtains, and floral wallpapers (see Figure 115 for the representation of bedrooms in American films). The only exception is the film *Two for the Seesaw*. Although there are no scenes in bed, and the bed is perfectly straight, it is understood that Jerry and Gittel had sex in this room.



The Women, 1939



The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, 1943



The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer, 1947



Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House, 1948



Father's Little Dividend, 1951



Send Me No Flowers, 1963

Figure 115. Bedrooms in American Films

On the other hand, British films tend to include more bedrooms in films, even in the 1940s. In *It Always Rains on Sunday*; Rose hides Tommy in her house without her family realizes it. While all go to downtown to have fun on Sunday afternoon, Rose takes Tommy to her bedroom and lies down with him on the bed she usually shares with her husband. In British films of the end 1950s, such as *Room at the Top* and *Look Back in Anger*, romantic scenes happen in bed, and they are shown by medium and short camera shots. Although there is not explicit sex, the approach is strongly less conservative than in American films. In

Darling, bedrooms and beds serve to portray two different generations and lifestyles. While Diana's parents, which represent the establishment and conservative values, are shown sharing a bed but their bodies lie down separated from each other, Robert and Diana are shown in a more realistic approach (see figure 116 for the representation of beds in British films).



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947



Room at the Top, 1958



Look Back in Anger, 1959



Darling, 1965



Darling, 1965

Figure 116. Bedrooms in British Films

Genres that feature female characters or families as protagonists, such as romantic comedies, and family dramas, tend to shape the women's role in society in very restrictive ways, much more than the male role. Happy women are portrayed as housewives and mothers, framed in kitchens. These films emphasize women's reproductive role, but at the same time, they restrict women's sexual desire, revealing by the strong conservatism of bedrooms sequences, even without matrimony. British films show the same emphasis on

family values, but they seem to liberate women in part from her exclusive role of housewife. Women framed in kitchens serve to illustrate working-class conditions rather than gender roles. In the same way, British films seem to show a more open attitude towards sex before American films, because in parallel periods, British films portrayed young female characters that felt free to demonstrate desire.

PART 3: THE SYMBOLIC DISCOURSE OF NATURE

Gardens, Loves, and Hopes

As we see in previous sections, the green ideal was used as the most recurrent discourse to argue for the elimination of slums and the convenience of new housing projects in documentaries. Parks and playgrounds for children, Garden Cities and suburban developments close to nature were the answers to the overcrowded, unhealthy and inhumane slums. The green ideal was firmly used as the opposition to the industrial city, and natural landscapes worked as symbolic images; they served to illustrate a hope, a dream, rather than a reality. The green ideal emerged and existed as an object of discourse in relation to the difference and opposition of the well-defined and well-described industrial city. As Foucault points out, the objects of discourse “do not define the object, but define its difference.”

In the same way, the condemnation of the metropolis was portrayed in films with landscapes of concrete and non-spaces, and if the nature was present, it served to symbolize the real home, such as in the films *Boys Town* and *The Asphalt Jungle*. On the other hand, the celebration of self-contained communities was portrayed by spaces of identity and closeness to nature. In American films, the countryside symbolizes the positive values of family, honesty and community; and in British films, with a stronger cultural tradition linked with urban spaces, spaces of identity and family are strongly linked with growing gardens. Gardens seem to be not only an important part of common British middle-class tastes, but a differentiation between the middle-class and the poverty of the slums. From this profound deficiency, the bucolic natural landscape functioned in films as a symbolic element, a cherished dream trying to delete the overbuilt landscape of the slums. This symbolic desire

was also reflected through portraying bucolic natural landscape as the only possible place in which love could be represented.

As we saw in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, nature functions as a trigger of conscience, as the instance of reflection and analysis, of deep thought. While Colin runs through the open fields analyzing his past life and taking decisions for the future, the only moments of happiness that Colin remembers are portrayed by natural landscapes.

In *Love in a Dole* the Hardcastles, a struggling working-class family, composed by the parents, the older sister Sally and the younger brother Harry, live in an industrial slum in Salford. Based on the 1933 Walter Greenwood novel, the film begins around the time of the General Strike of 1926, but its main action takes place in 1931. Harry after years working as an apprentice is fired in the midst of the Great Depression, and he cannot find a job. Meanwhile he becomes romantically involved with a girl on his street, Helen, whom he gets pregnant. Sally falls in love with the socialist agitator Larry, and all romantic sequences of both, Harry and Helen, and Sally and Larry, are framed in bucolic landscapes (see Figure 117).



Love in a Dole, 1941

Figure 117. Romance in *Love in a Dole*

When Sally and Larry come together to the countryside, and Sally sees the natural landscape for the first time in her life, she comments, “Here is so lovely, make me see things different; I never want to come back.” Then Larry responds, “Think about these poor people who do not have any chance to a better life... we have to fight.” Here the natural landscape not only is the backdrop for love, but nature works as a reason for the struggle of the workers. In *Room at the Top*, the ambitious Joe Lampton moved from the factory town of Dufton to Warnley, to work as a clerk in the Borough Treasurer’s Department. As Joe arrives to the town, two women attract him at the same time: Susan, the upper-class daughter of a local industrial magnate, and Alice, the unhappily married older woman. With Alice, Joe begins a passionate secret affair, while with Susan, social barriers impede to start a romantic relationship. When finally Joe seduces Susan, the romantic encounter is suggested in a small cabin in the middle of the countryside. When Alice decides to leave her husband to marry with Joe, Joe and Alice decide to spend a whole weekend together to think calmly, instead of brief fleeting encounters. They go to a cozy cottage at the coast, where they find the place to express their deepest love (see Figure 118).



Room at the Top, 1958

Figure 118. Romance in *Room at the Top*

In *A Taste of Honey*, the only time Jo and Geoffrey go the countryside, is the first and only time Geoffrey kisses her and asks Jo to marry him. We see them running in freedom through the open fields, sharing a chocolate, and making plans for the future (see Figure 119).



A Taste of Honey, 1961

Figure 119. Romance in *A Taste of Honey*

In *It Always Rains on Sunday*, the only time that the urban landscape shifts to a natural and bucolic landscape is when Rose's daughter, Vi, goes with her married boyfriend to the countryside to spend a quiet day together (see Figure 120).



It Always Rains on Sunday, 1947

Figure 120. Romance in *It Always Rains on Sunday*

The discourse of nature works as a clear opposite to the industrial city. Working as the opposition of something, its own definition tends to become a symbol of all desires: happiness, liberation, the idea of home, the place for love, and so on. However, the use of natural and bucolic landscapes to represent love was also used by American films of small community life (see Figure 121).



Our Town, 1940



Kings Row, 1942



The Magic Town, 1947



All That Heaven Allows, 1955

Figure 121. Romance and Nature in American Small Town Films

FINDINGS CHAPTER 3

RQ (3) What were the most predominant urban models and architectonic models of housing that were commented on by American and British films during the 1930s and 1960s?

The most recurrent urban model represented on screen is the metropolis, which was linked with apartment buildings in American films, and with both apartment and townhouses in British films. In both countries the metropolis was also portrayed by slums. On the other hand, small towns and suburbs, portrayed by single-family houses in American films, and traditional and suburban neighborhoods, portrayed by townhouses in British films, were the other urban models represented on screen.

RQ (4) What were the main discourses associated with these models that were commented on by American and British films during the 1930s and 1960s?

From the sample of 87 films examined in this study, there are distinct genres that portray the discourse of the city in similar ways. In this sense, the findings of this study reveal that genres work as cultural frameworks that distribute urban dominant discourses, and help to shape “grand narratives” about spaces and the way people should live.

American and British documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s, found in the film medium an effective way to inform, convince, and distribute city discourses. The documentaries analyzed in this project, demonstrate that they are a genre; they use recurrent themes, characters, landscapes, townscapes, and style; and they portray a distinctive discourse: the condemnation of the metropolitan slums and the celebration of new developments. They also use the same arguments to support the discourse, advocating

planning as a scientific discipline able to solve the problems of the city; and advocating functionality, separation of zone uses, fresh air, sunlight, open and green spaces as meaning the recipe to cure the metropolitan disease. Documentaries also portray both models the Garden City and the Radiant City to illustrate the same arguments, demonstrating from a historical approach, how this genre reproduced the competing discourses discussed on the time. This fact demonstrates that genres reproduce and discuss contextual and historical events, and serves as a powerful source for historical research.

The American films of the 1930s about kids of the streets use similar film techniques and rhetorical practices to represent the metropolis as a bad influence for kids. This body of films shares pro-filmic features, filmic techniques, style, types of characters and themes, which form a clear genre. This genre seems to emerge with these specific features, by the influence of close historical events, such as the crisis of the Great Depression and the Housing Act of 1937, demonstrating that commercial films, which were intended to entertain, used the film medium to discuss contextual themes. The discourse of this genre condemns the metropolis as a bad influence for kids, and links the metropolis with poverty and criminality. This genre, understood as a cultural framework, helps to stigmatize poor neighborhoods located in metropolitan areas, by explaining youth criminal behavior only by the influence of the environment. The discourse of the films presents the kids living in the streets, without parental guidance, or with deteriorate or dysfunctional families. They also represent disciplinary institutions as the societal solution for the kids. This discourse strongly illuminates broader cultural discourses developed previously, which work by accumulation.

The link with environment and moral behavior, the disciplinary society, and the pastoral power exercised by the modern state, are some examples that illustrate previous discourses.

In the same way, American and British crime films of the 1940s and 1950s are a distinct genre, using in many cases semi-documentary shots to portray real disciplinary institutions. These films share distinct characters, themes, pro-filmic features, rhetorical practices and film techniques to portray a discourse that criminalizes the metropolis. The emergence of this genre can be explained only in part by historical and contextual events. New laws that provided the FBI with comprehensive crime fighting powers to combat rising criminality, could explain the discussion of crime and disciplinary institutions to control and prevent crime, but the whole criminalization of the city space does not be explained only by contextual events. The fact that crime films used metropolitan backdrops in their stories also speaks about taken-for-granted frameworks that assume that crime must be developed only in metropolitan spaces. These films not only stigmatize the metropolis, they also stigmatize the inhabitants of the metropolis, and this discourse seems to be rooted in previous cultural approaches to the city.

British films of the end-1930s and 1940s, which portray laborers and their suffering conditions in slums, reiterates characters, settings, and themes, linking difficult living conditions with specific metropolitan landscapes. However the representation of the British laborer seems to evolve decalades later. The disappointed laborer of the 1950s and 1960s, represented in kitchen sink films, seem to be immersed and seduced by consumerism, as a one-way journey, and as a result of a society without hope. The motive of this genre also changed during the time. While films of the 1930s and 1940s intend to keep the laborers'

spirit high during wartime, and they transmit a sense of hope about the future, the films of the 1950s and 1960s do not see solutions for the laborers situation, and their pessimistic approach functions as a stronger critical attitude. These films not only depict in a realist form the living condition of the working-class, they also condemn the society as a whole. Both categories of films present an evolution in terms of the laborer's depiction, but both represent in a consistent form relationships between metropolitan space and negative values. The inclusion of iconographic representations of slums, such as clotheslines and smokestacks, function as powerful images that link metropolis with poverty, unhealthy conditions, and difficult life.

American small town films are also a distinct genre. They portray similar characters, pro-filmic features, film techniques, style, and similar discourses. The emergence of this genre can be explained by historical and contextual events such as the Great Depression and the call to return to the soil; but the celebration of self-contained communities as the most appropriate environment to raise a family, seems to respond to cultural approaches, which cannot be completely explained by contextual events, but by deepest and persistent discourses that see the metropolis as a source of risk, and the countryside as the "natural" context for "normal" people.

American suburban comedies are also a genre; it portrays similar characters, similar pro-filmic features, film techniques and style. The discourse of these films based on family values, matrimony and romantic stories, strongly misrepresent the metropolitan space, and link the big city with work, and men role as provider. The discourse of these films are not focused on urban issues, such as documentaries, but the celebration of suburban life as the

most appropriate environment to raise a family, and the clear separation between work and house, illuminate cultural approaches of the time.

The findings of the study reveal that American films portrayed differently than by British films the discourse of the metropolis. American films represent the metropolis as a dangerous place, associated with poverty, criminality, or at least, with frivolous characters and sexual temptations. For Americans the metropolis is necessary for the economic progress of the nation; and the only justification for the metropolis seems to be that it provides sources of work. Although the discourse of the metropolis in British films condemns the slums of industrial cities and criminalizes the metropolis in crime films, the common British family does not condemn the city per se. The metropolis is for British families a place to live and work; and their places of public identity are linked with urban spaces, such as urban neighborhoods, town markets, city pubs, and funfairs. On the other hand, American films represent common families in small communities close to the countryside, as safe places to raise a family and to maintain moral values. As far as they are from the metropolis, the more they can guarantee the family's protection from the criminal, anonymous and dangerous city. For Americans, spaces of public identity are linked with the Main Street of small towns, the church, and communitarian clubs, showing a strong conservatism; also in the way they portray domestic spaces. For this reason, American films systematically stigmatize the apartment, which is the distinctive metropolitan housing model. In the same way, poor people are not represented in small towns, neither in suburbs. They are condemned to stay in the metropolis, living in distinctive places, separated with streets and open spaces from the urban pattern of the rest of the city, where the economic progress is developed.

This project also reveals, especially through the analysis of documentary films, that British culture possesses a strong historical tradition, which allows their symbolic identification with both traditional cities and bucolic landscapes. On the other hand, American films seem to symbolize the modern progress through the representation of skyscrapers, as centers of business and economic power, but at the same time, American society seems to have a strong rural tradition, which is linked with family and communitarian values.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The findings of the analysis on city's discourses, illuminate aspects that are not evident by researching the history of architecture and cities through traditional frameworks, such as the analysis of specific projects, architects or authors. The theoretical model focused on discourse analysis and the genealogical method serve to illuminate the system of relations between different elements, which operated as not visible rules. The green ideal was the object of discourse, which emerged with a very precise function: to combat the evils of the overcrowded, unhealthy and overbuilt slums of the industrial city. The green ideal was an object of discourse in relation to other objects (slums, poverty, criminality, congestion, etc.), and by the establishment of relations of distance, difference, and transformation, this object operated as the opposition to all threats of the industrial city. The object was not necessarily defined; but two different models portrayed the solution: the Garden City and the Radiant City. Both models not only carried on the green ideal, they were also competing models of the time, which were presented as valid solutions during the first-half of the twentieth century, and they emerged not as natural responses, but thanks to the validation of the discourses that supported the models. These models shaped taken-for-granted frameworks about how people must live, and contributed to form the urban a priori that guided their emergence.

The green ideal was validated by experts, or in Foucault's words, enunciative subjects, who enounced, delimited, and constructed the hierarchies, the authority, and the conditions for the interchange of information. The enunciative subjects spoke from

institutional sites, such as planning areas, which gave to them the authority to speak about urban issues. In this way, institutions articulated the relationship between power and knowledge.

The green ideal as the best solution for the city's growth, started to be repeated by different people, not only by specific architects or urban theorists, but by any sort of operators under the same episteme, such as professionals, journalists, political authorities, university departments, and so on, which distributed discourses through the most available media of the time. Previous to the invention of cinema and the mass use of film medium, discourses of urban issues were distributed by books, journals and newspapers, as well as, through statements of governmental departments, professional conferences such as the CIAM, or by national committees formed to discuss city issues. These discourses and statements created the formation of strategies, which were conceptual group of objects and types of enunciation with acceptable coherence, stability, and rigor that allowed the formation of certain themes. These statements and discourses stimulated the rise of urban regulations and laws, which encouraged the implementation of certain housing models over others, and the implementation of zone uses, based on functionalist approaches that encouraged clear separation between home and work.

The second part of the research demonstrates that the film medium was one site, among others, where urban planning and architectonic ideas were discussed, but more important, where discourses of the city were systematically distributed. The analysis of films demonstrates as well, that it is a powerful form to research urban and architectonic issues in

terms of spatial values, or how the film medium helped to promote and reject certain urban models.

The analysis of urban themes through diverse film genres, such as documentaries, crime films, urban dramas, comedies, family dramas, etc., demonstrates that there are multiple genres in which the city plays a central role. These films analyzed as individual texts provide useful information, but the research on categories of films using the genre theory approach, provides the arguments to demonstrate that there is a strong relationship between genres and discourses' distribution. Certain genres help to shape certain taken-for-granted assumptions about the city space; examples such as crime films and urban dramas that link criminality with metropolis, or small town films that link self-contained communities close to the countryside with family and moral values, serve as clear examples of genres that shape assumptions and create grand narratives around urban solutions. In this sense, genres cristalize discourses, according to their audience, the most appropriate medium, the close cultural contexts, and the dominant discourse or historical apriori. However, as dominant discourses are less changeable than film genres, because dominant discourses tend to be invisible, the emergence of certain genres during specific epochs, such as documentaries that speak about cities' growth during the 1930s and 1940s, and the decline of the same genre years after, suggests that the discourse adopts an available genre within a medium for its distribution, and abandons the medium when it finds a more appropriate meidium, or when the distribution of the discourse is not a priority at the time. From this approach genres are the mechanism whereby discourses are represented and modified, and discourses not only use certain mediums, they also use certain genres.

The emergence of similar discourses in different times and countries, such as the American kid's films of the 1930s, which link poverty with criminality and industrial cities, and British films such as *Violent Playground* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* that also link the same themes and appear two decades after, illustrate that the emergence of genres that portray certain discourses may be explained not only by contextual historical events, such as the Great Depression or the slum clearance programs, but by broader discourses that form the historical a priori, which are subject of any interruption or break. The form that these discourses adopt is effectively linked with contextual and closer historical times; the kids of the 1930s are the product of the America of the 1930s, and the British kids of the 1960s, who like rock and roll and enjoy watching TV, are also the product of specific contexts and epochs. This project cannot demonstrate with more examples that *Violent Playground* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* are the response of a distinct genre in Britain; we need to research with this focus to validate such hypothesis, but demonstrates that the discourse that gives to the environment the power to shape moral behaviors of its inhabitants is a persistent discourse, and cannot be explained exclusively by historical events that occurred during the time the genre emerged.

The condemnation of the metropolis and the stigmatization of the apartment dwelling, especially by American films, demonstrate that the urban a priori of the time, which see the green ideal and the politics of dispersion as the medicine to the metropolitan disease, was strongly distributed through diverse film genres.

This study also demonstrates that the analysis of domestic spaces in films serves to illuminate, not only the private worlds of characters, but also the constructed ideologies of

individual identities. For example, the American idealized kitchen, which was portrayed as the mirror of well constituted families, matrimones, and social class, help to shape taken-for-granted assumptions about what should be the desirable lifestyle, creating a link between certain spaces and certain behavior. In the same sense, urban spaces reveal public identities and collective fears and wishes, as well as, they help to attribute meaning to certain spaces, which become repositories of collective memory.

The use of green landscapes to portray wishes and values, such as love and happiness, illustrate that the idyllic pastoral is still present in the collective memory, and serves to frame any sort of positive value.

Using the genealogic approach to study city discourses through film genres, we must put attention on the widest range of urban and architectonic discourses that form the historic a priori of the time the genre emerged. However, we must put attention too on the immediate cultural context, as well as, on the medium available that found specific genres, the most appropriate way to distribute the discourse. The relationship between the whole discourse, which functions as a process of accumulation, with the cultural immediate context, and the medium, seems to shape the conditions for the emergence of a genre. When slums were not the main problem of the city, but it was criminality, crime films emerged, but thanks to the urban a priori of the time, which condemned the metropolis, the landscape of crimes were set in the metropolis, but not in small communities and countryside. In the same way, when sexual discourses began to be more open, they used the metropolis and the apartment dwelling to set the frivolous characters.

Although discourses and genres share many characteristics, genres not only crystallize discourses that circulate around an episteme, they also evolve, and this evolutionary principle is articulated by the effectiveness of the medium to communicate the immediate cultural context. For this reason this study suggests that to understand discourses, genres serve only as part of the understanding; and research on immediate cultural influences is useful, but not enough. To understand discourses, we also need to research the conditions that allowed the emergence of the discourse, as well as, the historical a priori, which supports the discourse's existence.

Contributions to the Architectonic Field

The contribution of this dissertation to the architectonic field may be explained by three main ideas: First, in terms of methodology; the combination between the study of two forms of communication, the language based and the motion image, to explore history of architecture, is an unexplored field within the discipline, which takes advantage from the availability of information and the accessibility for searching this information. This methodology is not based on data, understood as measurable information that can be ordered in structured tables and graphics. Neither is a method based on interpretation, from a hermeneutical approach. This project and its methodology are based on what has been formulated at a given moment, and what has been portrayed at a given moment, and this approach seems to be a powerful framework to illuminate historical aspects that are not evident by using traditional approaches, such as the identification of meaning associated with spaces.

Second, the inclusion of the concept of historical a priori suggests a provocation within the architectural debate. The historical analysis based on discourses suggests a reflection on our own understanding, as designers, of the city space. Are we really designing our cities, and thinking about the best solutions, or are we operators immersed in a dominant discourse and our designs respond to that? Is the city really a place full of negative values, and the suburb the only way to live? To analyze discourses, and especially to understand what were the conditions that allowed the formation of discourses that dominated and still dominate the city's growth, is a provocative way to initiate a debate about the space that surrounds us.

The third idea has to do with using films genres to analyze architecture. The analysis of films to approach city spaces is not new. There are valuable contributions and research about architects, projects, and styles, explored by different approaches such as the analysis of set design, architects who collaborate with the film industry, or recurrent representations of the city space. The originality of this project is the research on films categories, rather than the focus on specific films. This framework seems to illuminate more clearly spatial discourses; it serves not only to discuss city's representations, but also illuminates the relationship between discourses, historical a priori, discourse distribution through media, and contextual historical influences. This approach opens up new lines of inquiry and defines the fact that specific film texts are useful to understand urban and architectonic representations, but they are not enough to comprehend the complex process of discourse distribution.

Recommendations for Future Research Projects

In order to continue building additional knowledge to the same topic, or different aspects of the same conceptual / novel area, is necessary to research on other film genres, countries and epochs. The process of urbanization in American and British cities should be compared with other industrial cities of countries such as, Germany, France or Italy, which not only experienced the process of city growth in a similar historic period; these countries also developed a strong cinema industry and there are numerous examples of films to analyze urban and architectonic discourses. The comparison between different countries in the same historic period could illuminate-if negative values associated with metropolitan spaces are generalized discourses or if they respond to American and British processes, which strongly link urbanization with industrial capitalism.

In the same way, the analysis of American and British films of periods after the 1960s could complement this project, researching urban and architectonic discourse's distribution through the film medium, and researching other mediums such as the television. This research could illuminate some genres that used the cinema before the invention of television migrated to the new medium, such as American family dramas and family comedies. The study of urban and domestic spaces in TV shows, analyzing spaces where the common family lives, could illuminate relevant aspects of spatial meanings in popular culture, as well as, diverse aspects related with the design discipline as a whole.

To mention other possible lines of investigation, the film representation of American and British social housing in later epochs, seem to be a relevant topic to complement this project. New York City's social housing buildings were used as backdrops of numerous films, especially after the 1970s. These films strongly contributed to stigmatize apartment dwellings by linking poverty and criminal behavior with specific urban and architectonic solutions.

If future lines of inquiry research architecture with the discourse approach, symbolic aspects, such as private and public identity can be illuminated. The analysis of architecture by the discourse approach, and using films, may serve to better illuminate that spaces carry on meanings and the understanding of spatial meanings is necessary for designers.

In order to expand the research that links discourse analysis with genre theory, the emergence of urban discourses, developed in Chapter 2, shows a varied repertoire of genres used to distribute the discourse, such as texts that commented on urban issues, institutional statements, professional statements produced by the CIAM or by the Garden City

Association, as well as, urban laws and regulations, etc. All these different forms of discourse distributions represent a valuable opportunity to research genres as cultural texts, and their relationship with the historical a priori of the time.

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¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 72.

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Notes Chapter 3

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