ABRAHAM AKKERMAN

ABRAHAM AKKERMAN is Professor of Geography and Associate Member of the Philosophy Department, University of Saskatchewan. He teaches urban planning, transportation, and the history of geographic thought. The present article, exploring the meaning of philosophical urbanism and its implications for city-form, was written at the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education – Economic Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague.

Philosophical urbanism

Perhaps the most benign of western concepts of nature are those of the Garden of Eden and of the ensuing fables of the golden age. In a haunting reversal from the tranquility of the Garden of Eden, however, nature turns from a serene abode of man into an object of menace and existential fear, following man’s expulsion from the Garden. Lacking inherent protection, the early man is forced to seek – and build – shelter to escape nature’s wrath and unpredictability.

Man’s concern for shelter against nature’s peril, as well as man’s admiration for the beauty and perfection of cosmos, find a universal imprint in the concept of the Ideal City. Whether in reality or in the mind of a human being, the Ideal City is a designed city – it can be conceived of only through the attendant action of its designer. Accordingly, throughout history cities have emerged due to three cerebral and material components acting upon each other: The existing built environment, in its more recent appearance referred to as city-form; the concept of an Ideal City, utilizing the existing built environment as a reference point; and the designer/s. All three components acting together can be referred to as the mind-city composite. Philosophical urbanism is founded upon the premise of continuous mutation of city-form and the Ideal City, as a mutual feedback in geographic space and in historic time.

Within the mind-city composite the stature of the designer is of precipitating concern. In the Ideal City positing itself primarily as a shield or a bulwark against human or natural adversary the designer emerges as the sole authority for the planned city-form. Plato’s Republic, written over two millennia ago outlining the ideal city-state, is the first document fomenting an authoritarian rule of a small elite over all and sundry. In the case of an authoritarian plan the designer, as a component of the mind-city composite, becomes in fact the Grand Designer, analogous to the demiurge in Plato’s cosmogony – the designer of the universe, the cosmoplast.

One example of the ongoing mutual feedback between mind and city-form – with the Grand Designer as a pivotal point – had commenced in 15th century’s monumental street plan of Rome, initiated by pope Nicholas VI and completed a few decades later by Sixtus V. In order to support large crowds of pilgrims Rome’s papal plan linked major monuments through a newly built network of straight, radiating roads with fountains sustained by a twenty mile long aqueduct channelling water from surrounding mountains. Inspired, in the first place, by Plato’s Republic the new plan of Rome further influenced Tomasso Campanella (1568 - 1639) in the writing of his theocratic Civitas Solis (The City of the Sun). In the late 1620s Campanella, finding refuge in France under the auspices of the Cardinal Armand Richelieu (1585-1642), began to urge the Cardinal to build an ideal city. A decade later the city of Richelieu was founded, built on a perfectly square perimeter, with immaculately orthogonal street layout.

Whereas in England Thomas More’s egalitarian Utopia (1516) gave rise in the 19th century to city planning incorporating – rather than conquering – nature, Richelieu – the man and the city – were the embodiment of autocracy and confrontation. A city to his namesake was nothing but a reflection of Richelieu’s attempt to consolidate royal power in his own hands. It is telling that, in the 19th century, like personality and comparable state of mind had marked the grand redesign of Paris by Baron George-Eugene Hausmann. Inspired by Hausmann’s redesign of Paris, urban planning of the early twentieth century had expressed the same Platonic disposition in monumental plans according to which cities were built or rebuilt: Canberra following the winning design of Walter Griffin, Chicago following Daniel Burnham’s Plan. The far-fetched designs of Le Corbusier’s Radiant City or Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City, in the early 20th century, suggest a similar Platonic pedigree. Emblematic were the infrastructure projects of Robert Moses in New York City, initiated in the 1920s and spanning over the following three decades. In his own eyes as in the eyes of many others, Moses was New York City’s Grand Designer, par excellence.
Demise of Platonism

It is instructive that the notion of the demiurge as the Grand Designer, along with Plato’s ideal blueprint of a city, also corresponds to Plato’s call for a uniform behaviour of all dwellers in the Ideal City. It is according to Plato’s own concept of the Ideal City, as he presents it in his Republic, that he wishes the Greek polis to be built. To be sure, Plato views the Ideal City as an imprint of the human soul, common to all humanity. On this view, the Ideal City is an inborn paradigm, collectively shared by humans, as well as a mirror of the human soul. It is for this reason, too, that, as a foundational tenet, the Ideal City is both a mental image as well as a universally shared allegory. In Jungian and post-Jungian psychoanalysis such universal allegories are referred to as myths. It is through its universal dispensation throughout all humanity that the myth of the Ideal City had become a central element in the evolution of city-form, and in the continuing, mutual feedback between nature, the built environment and mind.

In order to explain nature’s variety and diversity Plato postulates the existence of Forms – ideal blueprints, plans or models of which objects and qualities in the real world are only imperfect exemplars. Inadvertently, this approach leads to a static worldview whereby the purported perfection of Forms is postulated as an immutable constant. Accordingly, Plato conceives his Ideal City – the Form of the city – as a guide to social uniformity and conformity.

Much of urban planning throughout history could be viewed, in turn, as the use of city-form to streamline the human crowd. In most cases this attempt, albeit unacknowledged, is to plan city-form as an image of a static Platonic Form. Perhaps more than any other facet of urban design and civic infrastructure of the 20th century, urban transportation, in particular, has addressed itself to the overwhelming task of moving enormous crowds back and forth between places of residence and places of work. Even today, notwithstanding the current state of communication technology and telecommuting, this daunting challenge can be fulfilled only through rational planning and automated means. It is precisely within this context where urban transportation, as a key component of contemporary urban planning, serves the Platonic task, and is the continuation of the historical attempt to turn city-form into a Platonic Form.

Yet it is at this point too where the Ideal City, mutating into 20th century myth of the Rational City, has backfired, producing a city-form aimed at the crowd, but incoherent or offensive to the individual. There is a gap between a plan and its aftermath in the city. In existentialist literature and philosophy, such as in the works of Kafka and Sartre, this gap has been expressed in alienation of urban dwellers, in the emotional response of dread, and in reflection upon meaninglessness as an underlying trait of 20th century city. In the gap between the myth of the well-functioning city and the reality of the malfunctioning city, alienation and dread are the means by which urban dwellers also begin to seek their own authenticity. It is at this point that the mind-city composite enters a new phase.

Be it urban transportation, shopping or the stock market, the effort of each individual within the crowd is to optimize his or her returns on his or her participation within the crowd: to minimize commuting time or costs, to maximize profits. The economic tenets of demand and supply are the determinants of this behaviour as well as of the infrastructure within which it takes place. The current state of information technology makes vast amounts of relevant data available to all, thus suggesting ever more efficient markets. The rational economic system of demand and supply, however, transforms itself into erratic behaviour of the crowd within increasingly incoherent city-form. Traffic congestion, line-ups, inadvertent breakdowns or wanton vandalism have been the prevailing hallmarks of 20th century urban environment.

Furthermore, careful observation suggests that the hyperactive behaviour of the urban crowd is not entirely explicable through the economic paradigm of demand and supply. Meaning of objects in the urban environment has been imposed upon the crowd by an authority – the municipality, the rules of urban transportation and safety. But more often than not, within city-form intended for crowds, objects or their configurations decay fast, or break down, and they often either lose their original meaning or they become utterly meaningless. In a more extreme situation they acquire a meaning contrary to their intended use. Both as a cause and as an effect of this decay, each of the subjects within the crowd extrudes his or her own being and intentions upon the rest of the crowd, to assert his or her own autonomy from a crowd forged within irrelevant, meaningless or counterproductive city-form.

The superconscious

In a free (i.e., democratic) social configuration, each individual within the crowd is allowed to assert his or her being, to extrude himself or herself against the rest of the crowd, within the limits of common law. The overall effect of such crowd circumstance yields a feeling of continually escalating meaninglessness in an environment which becomes self-contradictory – an obstacle rather than a means. Individuals increasingly focus their attention upon the urban crowd itself as an obstruction, and sharpen their attempts in seeking ever-new means at extrusion from the urban crowd.
of which they are a part. In its overall effect, this progressively intensifying feedback pattern could best be labelled as the urban superconscious.

To maintain a designed metropolitan environment within its initial intent, an obedient society and an autocratic rule are implicit as the only solution. But a regimented Platonic society that adheres to authoritarian rules is not only the condition but also the offspring of such an environment. A sinister design link is embedded in a chain of lineage that Karl Popper shows to lead from Plato to modern European dictatorships. Twentieth century’s prime examples were the Nazi urban design of Albert Speer and its match in Soviet urban art and architecture. Perhaps best epitomising the latter were the enormous statues of Joseph Stalin dispersed after WWII throughout Soviet bloc’s cities and towns in Eastern Europe.

High on a hill above the river, overlooking the city of Prague, as if watching each of its inhabitants’ steps, stood in the 1960s one such mammoth statue of Stalin. The city’s skyline was defined for years by this colossal monument, bluntly reminding the citizens below that they are members of a society forced into a blueprint by the Grand Designer. Entering adulthood in the shadow of Stalin’s legacy, the Czech writer Milan Kundera was a member of this society. A decade later he escaped the socialist dystopia for an exile in Paris. Kundera’s words, in a novel he wrote several years into his post-communist exile in a free, western society do not define the superconscious but they accurately describe it as a street episode. His words resonate of a commonplace yet deep, shared and intense experience, and hardly require further interpretation:

She said to herself: when the onslaught of ugliness became completely unbearable, she would go to the florist and buy a forget-me-not, a single forget-me-not, a slender stalk with miniature blue flowers. She would go out into the streets holding the flower before her eyes, staring at it tenaciously so as to see only that single beautiful blue point, to see it as the last thing she wanted to preserve for herself from a world she had ceased to love [...] Suddenly, the sharp sound of a motorcycle pierced her being. She could not help but immediately look towards something that had caused such physical pain: a young girl in jeans, her black hair waving behind her, erect on a small motorcycle as if she were sitting at a typewriter; it had no muffler and made a horrific noise. [...] It wasn’t the machine that was making the noise; it was the “I” of the black haired girl, trying to make herself heard, to penetrate the consciousness of the rest by linking her being to the deafening escape of the engine. Agnes looked at the hair streaming behind that noisy aggressor and realized she intensely wished the death of that girl. [...] Her hate immediately frightened her and she said to herself: the world has arrived to the frontier of something disastrous; if it crosses it, everything will turn to madness: the people will wander through the streets with forget-me-nots in their hands or will kill each other on sight. It will take very little, the drop of water that overflows the glass: just one car, person or decibel more.14

Urban decay

In a brilliant stroke of pen Kundera shows the superconscious emerging from a city-form structured entirely for the crowd. As if taking a cue from the intimidating, colossal statue of Stalin in 1960s Prague, the scale of this city-form, first and foremost, is inhuman. Furthermore, it is inhuman not only in its visual aspects but, mainly, in its other sensual aspects. The speed, the noise and the smell of vehicles are the primary affront to the individual in a built environment that no longer is to human scale. The fundamental question we ought to ask, then, is whether at all there still exists a place in the city that is to human scale. Such question relates directly to the argument that the mythical counterpart of the Ideal City is the Garden. To the extent that the urban superconscious is an offspring of the Myth of the Rational City, what then is the counterpart of the urban superconscious? Is there an urban subconscious that emanates in some way from the Myth of the Garden?

Returning briefly to Kundera’s story, one may ask whether Agnes, clutching a tiny forget-me-not in her hand, a remnant of a garden, is heralding the end of the city, or the renewal of the Garden Myth.
within the city. Agnes' flower, the Myostis sylvatica, carries in fact a myth of its own — that of a medieval knight and his lady walking on a riverbank. Leaning to pick a posy of flowers for his lover, the knight — under the weight of his armour — falls into the river. As he drowns he throws the posy to his loved one, begging her, "Forget-me-not!" If there no longer is even a remnant of the Garden Myth in the city, then there is no escape from the urban subconscious: the legend of the flower, turns into a prophecy for a city choking in its own armour.

If the Garden Myth still exists within the city, it must be the city's Reverse side. Where is such Reverse side?

The traits exuded by the Ideal City were shown to be stability, solitude, and solidarity, with the corresponding affective features of surveillance, certainty and conclusiveness. Such are also the pretences of the Rational City. The respectively opposite attributes of the Garden Myth are, ingathering and change, multitude, and softness. Associated with the Garden are three affective features: surprise, ambiguity; incompleteness. These three features emerging from the Garden could be seen in the theatrical satiric scene of Marcus Vitruvius Polio (1st Cent., BCE). The Vitruvian satiric scene is a pastoral setting of people and decrepit dwellings in nature's wilderness, picturing those who lived outside cities — the rustic people.

A fitting contemporary urban parallel to this scene is urban decay. Indeed, in observing the 20th century city, the three affective features of the Garden Myth, virtually absent in public parks or private gardens, are almost inherent to places of urban decay. Objects within the confines of the place of urban decay are — almost by definition — purposeless, unsightly, and often potentially harmful. But are not danger, fear and a sudden onslaught of ugliness associated with surprise? And is not surprise a condition to serendipity — that which makes us all human?

The photographer Ryuji Miyamoto has been known for his works that silently document the "unconscious" of the city through the decay of disintegrating architecture. Is urban decay, then, the counterpart of the superconscious of the mind-city composite? Is urban decay, indeed, the subconconscious of mind-city? To Jean-Paul Sartre, a place of urban decay is the city's Reverse side: "the town has forgotten it." An un-planned place in the city, the place of urban decay is where the Myth of the Rational City has failed to take reign.

The un-planned

Mainstream urban planning, imprisoned by its own terminology, has usually viewed urban decay as a threat, a stain to be eradicated from the face of cities. Up until the 1970s, a weapon of choice against urban decay for North-American planners had been the urban freeway. Rather than eliminating decay the urban freeway, of course, has only displaced it elsewhere in the city, and more often than not it has generated blight and ugliness in or around its own path. It is also in this sense that the reality of urban decay, much as the Myth of the Garden, is the anti-thesis of the Ideal City, the polar opposite of an urban blueprint and a static plan. In the collective consciousness of human beings, the Ideal City is a shared myth. Within the contemporary city, the city of the superscale, urban decay is an ever-present, ongoing reality.

A place in the city does not turn suddenly into “urban decay.” As the disparaging term accurately suggests, urban decay is a process. And as a process urban decay is a time-bound aspect of the mind-city composite. In its affective and aesthetic aspects, the processual feature of urban decay is an accurate reflection of the Myth of the Garden: sporadic surprise, formless ambiguity and perpetual incompletion.

City-form as a whole could be better comprehended as an interaction over time between the plan and the un-planned. As a spatio-temporal entity, the mind-city composite entreats a processual rather than mechanistic disposition. A temporal, organic stance seems to be therefore more relevant also in understanding facets of city-form other than urban decay. It is here where the circumstance of the Garden can project its own features upon the city. In the Garden of Eden the environment is not being intruded upon by any one individual. There is no crowd, but there are other autonomous subjects, with whom the environment is shared. Objects and their configurations in such an environment invite interaction because their size, speed, smell and noise correspond to the scale of living creatures. Accordingly also, objects and their configurations within this environment are not pre-defined, but attain meaning through interaction with subjects.

But is there a possibility to design artefacts without pre-defining their use? Can artefacts be designed without a defining, constraining blueprint? Architectural deconstruction leaves behind the concept of conventional blueprint. Furthermore, as a behavioural feature, it seems that architectural deconstruction is a response to human movement rather then to the need for shelter. It is for this reason too that transportation and open urban spaces allowing movement to human scale should be the ultimate venues of urban deconstruction.

Human movement through space is integral and a deeply ingrained feature of cerebral development. The striking physical difference between the Schools of Plato and Aristotle in ancient Athens had been the motionless seating within Plato's Academy, contrasted with boardwalks intended for continuous pacing, that have been the defining
physical structures of Aristotle’s Lyceum. The built environments of the two Schools within which two contrasting philosophical doctrines were taught, mirrored also the substance of both philosophies.

The static philosophy of Plato yielded the myth of the still, ideal city-state which, in 20th century’s Myth of the Rational City brought about its own contradiction in the urban subconscious. In contrast to his teacher Plato, Aristotle forged his own worldview as a reflection of change observable in living nature. Twentieth century process philosophy recognizes change, not as a problem to be measured and explained, but as the ultimate constituent of our world, to be assimilated as a subjective, un-mediated and immeasurable experience. One example of such immeasurable experience is what Anton Kuerti alluded to in the last issue of The Structurist, writing: “Clocks must be ignored, indeed banished, while one is immersed in music.” Conferring the ambience of the Garden Myth onto city-form, to bring about an authentic flow of affirmative human experience, should be the primary intent of deconstructive urban design. Walking, too, can be part of a behavioural mode which immerses one in a spontaneous flow of consciousness.

Human scale

It is emblematic that on the boardwalk of Aristotle’s Lyceum walking and thinking complemented each other. Twentieth century urban design, concerned with motor transportation while desperately attempting to preserve spatial coherence, safety and security, had separated the two human attributes of walking and thinking. Consistent with the Platonic worldview, the Myth of the Rational City has been an attempt at a surprise-free city – automatic, uniform and universal. Its ultimate failure is in its lack of response to the essence of human disposition – change, variety and diversity, all within human scale.

Recognition of human scale in urban design identifies walking and thinking as consistent with our very own developmental stages, the *homo erectus* and the *homo sapiens*. Walking, as an elemental biosocial expression of change, is the exact opposite of urban uniformity. Could a deconstructive approach to urban design advance an urban walking infrastructure that facilitates access while addressing the need for human interaction and cerebral progress? Could pedestrian networks, addressing the need for convenient access and temporal shelter from inclement weather, be interspersed also with public art and street furniture conducive to intellectual challenge (through deliberate ambiguity), endorsing creativity (through incompletion in select structures) and serendipity (through unexpectedness and surprise)? This is a difficult, but not insurmountable, problem. Utilizing the three main tenets of urban decay a deconstructive infrastructure for walking need not confront but rather complement mechanized city-form and transportation.

The conventional hierarchy in urban transportation networks has seen the urban freeway as the most significant of conduits, the next being the arterial roadway, the collector road, the subcollector, and the residential street. Back alleys, particularly in Canadian inner cities, have never even figured as an option in urban transportation. Yet as a narrow street canyon, virtually void of automobile traffic, warmer in winter than the city’s exposed streets, the back lane or alleyway has a significant design potential for accommodating and encouraging pedestrian traffic. In designing for transportation to human scale, authenticating the human outdoor experience must be paramount. To achieve this in ameliorating parts of existing transportation networks into pedestrian precincts, the conventional urban transportation hierarchy must be inverted, setting the walkway, the lane and the back alley, as the most significant of conduits.

Pedestrian precincts that have been introduced into contemporary cities elsewhere are often in the vicinity of heritage sites in order to protect the latter from vibration and pollution caused by mechanized traffic. But as yet, no principles or guidelines for transportation networks promoting and integrating pedestrian movement have been introduced. A deconstructive approach to urban design should help seek out these guidelines precisely.

Some of the benchmarks in the analysis of deliberate ambiguity in street objects and in objects of outdoor public art have been discussed in recent years. Some of these considerations could be expanded into formal aspects of pedestrian networks, as Christopher Alexander had shown. Vertices in a pedestrian network could be small clusters of objects where pedestrians may linger for more than just a few seconds. Each vertex would relate to a specifically designed single object that jointly fulfills routine tasks, such tasks otherwise (and usually) represented by disparate objects such as, for example, a mail box, information kiosk, bench or a bus stop. Similarly arcs between vertices should be not only sidewalks, crosswalks, and streets, but mainly back alleys along with other alleyways and pathways. Questions that will need to be addressed carefully are those related, for example, to maximum flows of people or minimum climatic distress through a pedestrian network.

But beyond specific operational issues in integrated transportation networks, only a single guiding consideration should remain: That it shall be the task of the urban designer to bring the Myth of the Garden into the streets and squares of the twenty-first-century-city.
Notes

1. At Mohenjo-Daro, c. 2400 BCE, twelve orthogonal city blocks measuring were formed by three avenues and two streets crossing them at right angles. The three avenues run north and south, with corresponding positioning in the subdivision of street blocks. The orienting of Mohenjo-daro to the points of the compass and the street layout into twelve blocks, apparently corresponding to the twelve lunar months, suggests adherence to cosmic order in early cities of India. It is noteworthy that two millennia later, in ancient Greece, some Stoics viewed the universe as a city. The notion of Cosmopolis, the cosmos as a city, was developed by Chrysippos of Soli (280 BC-206 BCE) and later canonized by Dio Chrysostom (40 – 120 CE). According to Diogenes Laertius in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers, VI 63 (trans. from Greek R.D. Hicks, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), however, Diogenes the Cynic (414 - 323 BCE) was the first to declare himself kosmopolités, a citizen of the world. He may have been, therefore, the first to introduce or to use the concept of Cosmopolis, and if so, this could have been also known to Plato (427-347 BCE) when he contemplated his ideal city-state.

2. The cosmogenic context of the demiurge had been anticipated by Anaxagoras (500 – 428 BCE) in his notion of cosmic Mind, and critiqued by Plato in Phaedo (97C-99D). The demiurge figures in the early version of the Argument from Design, in Cicero’s De natura deorum, ii 34. The Argument is later fully developed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his Summa Theologica, Part I, Question 2, Article 3. In its more recent version, the Argument has been known as the assertion of intelligent design, introduced in the Natural Theology of William Paley (1743 - 1805).

3. Campanella’s urban vision was “a hill upon which the greater part of the city is situated [...]. The city is divided into seven large circuits, named after which the greater part of the city is situated [...]. The city’s natural ecology of Patrick Geddes. Richelieu, on the other hand, exemplified attitude to city planning prevalent throughout much of continental Europe during the Renaissance, such as the rigid Christianopolis (1619) by Johann Valentin Andreae or the ideal city, Freudenstadt, in Swabia designed by the architect Heinrich Schickhardt (1558-1635).

4. In his Utopia More writes: “Large gardens, which extend the full length of the street behind each row of houses, form the centre of the blocks. Every house has a front door and a back door to the garden [...]. The Utopians are very fond of these gardens of theirs. They raise vines, fruits, herbs and flowers, so thrifty and flourishing that I have never seen any gardens more productive and elegant than theirs.” See Thomas More, Utopia, edited and translated by George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 69. More became the harbinger of urban planning in England, culminating in 19th century public parks of Joseph Paxton, the Garden City concept of Ebenezer Howard, and the city’s natural ecology of Patrick Geddes. Richelieu, on the other hand, exemplified attitude to city planning prevalent throughout much of continental Europe during the Renaissance, such as the rigid Christianopolis (1619) by Johann Valentin Andreae or the ideal city, Freudenstadt, in Swabia designed by the architect Heinrich Schickhardt (1558-1635).


9. In Book V (746) of his Laws Plato fashions the citizens as if they were made “out of waxwork.” The Grand Designer is also none other than the Philosopher-King, a representative of Plato’s guardian class. See Gerard Naddaf, “Introduction,” in Luc Brisson, Plato the Myth Maker (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p. xxxii.


11. As a reflection of the human psyche the Ideal City is a shared aspect of the human subconscious. In terms of Jung’s psychology Plato’s allegory of the Ideal City is an archetypal, a universal myth, much as are other shared paradigms uncovered by Jung: the Mother, the Old-Wise Man, the Child, the Hero, the Trickster, the Animal, God, and Self. Many, if not all, of the archetypes emerge in folktales and fairytales. Yet Jung enlists anthropomorphic figures, rather than environmental paradigms. Neither the Castle (or a Citadel) nor the Garden (or Nature) are, therefore, among Jung’s archetypes.

12. Throughout most of his dialogues, Plato uses the theatrical figure of his own teacher, Socrates, a mason’s son. It is through Socratic argumentations in the Republic and the Timaeus that the architectural bond, inherent in the notion of Forms, is articulated through the analogy between a Form and an architect’s model. The very term, Form, in
the presentation of Plato’s doctrine is due to Cicero’s translation, “forma,” of the Greek words “idea” or “eidos” of Plato’s original Greek. The Latin “forma” frequently refers to a groundplan or a map (such as the extant Forma urbis Romae). Cicero, in his translation of Plato, carefully follows the urban and architectural context of Plato’s philosophy, adhered to also in later medieval religious interpretations of Plato. Extending Plato’s doctrine, Thomas Aquinas, in Question I, Article 1c of his Random Topic Questions refers to the term “idea” as consigned to a pattern, a blueprint or a plan, with the intention to produce an external work. See Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones Quodlibetales (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983).


18. The rustics were essentially homeless people, and the scene therefore relates to the uncanny, to homelessness. Later in the 15th century, Sebastiano Serlio referred to the satiric scene as involving “dissolute and devil-may-care lives [where] the corrupt and criminals were identified.” See Sebastiano Serlio, The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Translation of 1611 L’Architettura. New York: Dover, 1982), Book II, 69v-70v.

19. A striking collection of Miyamoto’s photographs, documenting architecture turning into ruins through the process of urban modernization, is in Ryuji Miyamoto, Architectural Apocalypse (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986).