DEFINING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC REALM:
AN ESCAPE FROM TRADITION

by

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ABSTRACT

Each day the form and future of our built-environment are subtly shaped by countless rulings of legislatively-empowered urban planning boards and agencies. The fields of urban planning and urban design, being inherently concerned with the physical development of cities, express their actions on behalf of the public interest on the 'public realm'; the collection of physical spaces to which the quality of 'publicness' can be attributed.

Although there is an inherent reliance on a definition of the public realm, it remains implicit and without consensus for most planning agencies. Even for the few that overtly accept their role as its guardians, confusion persists because of uncertainty over the degree of control appropriate to regulate the public sphere. This uncertainty stems from the ambiguity of the definition of the public realm.

Amidst a series of dynamic forces shaping public life it remains unclear what direction the form of the public realm will take if its definition persists to be ambiguous. This study is an exploration into the sources of this ambiguity, how our notions of it are being redefined, and what can be done to overcome it; two phenomena are examined to do so. First, the emergence of a private public realm characterized by high levels of artificial control. The case of Universal CityWalk, a recent commercial development in Los Angeles, California, elucidates the components and impact of this emergence.

The second phenomenon is an erosion of the traditional civic public realm where the conventional constraints of social control are being subverted by forces related to fear, technology, market segmentation, and the pursuit of a sense of community. In order to stem the ambiguity and depletion of the civic environment, policy-makers will have to recognize a shift towards a multiplicity of forms of the public realm. The study concludes with a suggestion of what these new forms are and how they will shape the future form and quality of public life in American cities into the next millennium.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: The Problem of the Public Realm. ............... 5

THE PROBLEM .......... 6
WHAT IS THE PUBLIC REALM? .... 10
IMPORTANCE OF THE DEFINITION OF THE PUBLIC REALM .... 12
DIFFICULTIES IN DEFINING THE PUBLIC REALM ........... 14
IMPLICATIONS OF LACKING A CONSENSUAL DEFINITION .... 16

Chapter Two: CityWalk: Promotion of the Private. ........... 18

SIMULATION .......... 32
DISTILLATION ......... 47
THEMING ............ 56
DISCRIMINATION .... 65

Chapter Three: Subversion of the Civic. ..................... 76

FEAR ............. 78
MARKET SEGMENTATION ...... 84
TECHNOLOGY ......... 90
SEARCH FOR A SENSE OF COMMUNITY .... 101

Chapter Four: The New Public Realm. ....................... 106

SCENARIO FOR THE FUTURE .......... 107
FORMS FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM ...... 112
BCDC MEETS CITYWALK ......... 119

Bibliography ........................................ 121
CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF
THE PUBLIC REALM
The Problem

The crowd had thinned and only a few die-hard observers remained. Speaking on behalf of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a gentleman rose and spoke to advocate the project under discussion. Directing his comments towards the six design review board commissioners at the front of the room, he praised the design of the waterfront structure and offered two suggestions: one, that the bridge connecting the proposed structure to the main building be completely transparent; and two, that the building be set back slightly to allow for a larger public walkway.

Speaking next, a representative of the renowned design firm that led the project team addressed the Commission. Referring to a detailed plexiglass-encased model, he described each of the project's major components. With the obligatory orientation completed, the Commission's chairperson commenced the discussion and a series of questions and suggestions followed on an array of issues, including:

◊ materials that would be used for the park in front of the building;
◊ color of a sculpture that was shaped in the form of a wave and rose as a tower from the main structure;
◊ the manner in which lighting would be used on the waterfront open space;
◊ landscaping between the building and the water;
◊ connection between the new and existing structures;
◊ whether the materials on the structure would age appropriately to blend with the surrounding historic context;
◊ if views of existing buildings would be obstructed.

Following an hour's discussion, a Commissioner (an engineer by profession) who was particularly concerned about the shape and patina of the wave sculpture offered the following motion: The Commission recommends approval of the proposed expansion subject to the study of three areas: 1) the extension of the sculpture over the public access along the walk; 2) the interface of new construction with the existing structure; and 3) development of the landscaping plan.
Another commissioner (a professor of architecture) suggested an amended motion that would approve the building as designed subject to additional review of the landscaping plan. A third commissioner concurred with this second motion, stating: "The whole design is unique and I would not interject my opinion on what a designer has in mind in terms of fun and fantasy."

It was suggested that the Commission send the project to subcommittee and, assuming that the design team addresses the three issues mentioned in the motion, the Commission would vote on the project next month. In disagreement, a supporter of the amended motion argued that if the Commission wanted to support the project it should do so unequivocally while also communicating the need to rework the landscaping plan.

Acknowledging that the Commission desired further input but preferred not to hinder the project's schedule, the chairperson resubmitted the initial motion. It was seconded and duly voted: the Commission recommends approval subject to additional study of the extension of the sculpture over the public access-way, the interface of the new construction of the existing building and further development of the landscaping plan. The vote was approved, four in support and two against.

As an observer of these proceedings, one thing was evident: the Commissioners were far from agreement on what aspects of the proposed project fell under their purview. One believed it was his responsibility to discuss the color and shape of the sculpture while another was concerned with the overall design of the project and believed the Commission should go on record strongly supporting it. A third member asserted that the more detailed issues like colors and materials should be left to the designer's unencumbered discretion.

Apparent to anyone in attendance, yet not captured in the meeting's minutes, was the mounting level of frustration among the Commissioners (particularly those who were architects) as their colleagues (particularly those who were non-architects) commented on and criticized extremely subjective and detailed aesthetic issues. Witnessing this, I thought to myself: How can they advocate good design if they cannot agree on what aspects of design they should be trying to affect? Should not there be a set of parameters to guide their decision-making?
Since its first public meeting on February 6, 1990, the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) has been gathering on the first Tuesday of each month. Appointed by the Mayor as a blue-ribbon, advisory design review panel to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the city's planning department), the BCDC was officially created upon the adoption in 1986 of Article 28 of the Boston Zoning Code. The Commission's confusion in determining its purview and perhaps its role is not due to a lack of a clearly stated charge as reiterated in the Commission's first Annual Report:

The purpose of the BCDC is to assist and advise the City in the design review of projects that affect the public realm and provide a forum for the general public and the professional design community to actively participate in the shaping of the City's physical form and natural environment. . . . It is clear that the BCDC's main focus has been on the issues related to the public realm of the City and the pedestrian experience -- those aspects of design that have the most dramatic impact on Boston's unique character.2

Stating that, "the public realm design issues that have been raised by the BCDC in its reviews are not new to urban planning but are those concepts that become the basic design principles of successful, human scaled environments," the Annual Report goes on to explain the three primary principles that the BCDC was set up to promote. These principles include:

◊ The design of streets and public walkways, as they pertain to accessibility and active ground floor uses;

◊ The design of public spaces in relation to creating active urban spaces;

◊ The design of buildings, referring to those aspects that allow it to contribute to the urban design of the public realm.3

Although its charter clearly states that the BCDC is responsible for promoting the interests of the public realm, confusion persists because of a dilemma prevalent among planning policy-makers: What degree of control should be applied to shape the public environment?

I believe that the source of this uncertainty emanates from the inherent difficulty of defining what is meant by the 'public realm'. This is illustrated by the Commissioners' diversity of responses to the question: "How do you define the public realm?":

1 The case described is based on the June 2, 1992 hearing of the Boston Children's Museum designed by Frank Gehry and Associates.


3 Ibid.
The impact of a building on a city and neighborhood, how it feels at street level, the shadows it casts, its massing, and how it looks on the skyline.

The appearance, convenience, and the quality of a development as it will be seen and enjoyed by users, passers-by, and visitors.

Exterior spaces between buildings; the roads, sidewalks, entrances, service areas, driveways.

Issues related to pedestrian access, promoting a sense of urbanity, maintaining view corridors, and assuring access to the waterfront.

Architecture as it relates to its context, but not architectural style. "A well-designed building is well-designed, and style has nothing to do with it."

All of the built environment that affects the physical and/or spiritual human being.

Urban design in its broadest sense: landscape treatments, environmental issues of wind and shadow, pedestrian comfort, safety, and programming for open spaces. "These are 'livability' and 'quality of space and life' issues."

Anything that affects the built-environment.

Capturing the essence of the struggle to reach a common definition, one commissioner concluded that the ultimate responsibility is "to our own vision of what the public realm should be." In a similar, yet less diplomatic vein, another commissioner reluctantly admitted, "We have never precisely defined it." However, within this sea of ambiguity a common assumption surfaces: the BCDC is responsible to transcend the interests of the few for the benefit of the many. The existence and operation of this body rests on the inherently assumption that the market cannot be left on its own to serve the general citizenry at an adequate level of equity.

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4 All of the responses to the question, "How do you define the public realm," were obtained from interviews with the BCDC Commissioners conducted in June, 1992.
What is the Public Realm?

The origin of the term 'public' can be traced to the Ancient Greeks who used the term *synoikismos*, a word also used to mean "making a city." The prefix *syn*, means a coming together, while *oikos* refers to a household unit in Greece equivalent to something between a family and a village, such as a tribe. It is when these *oiki* migrated to central locations that the Greek cities were formed. But *synoikismos* refers to more than just the gathering of people, it literally means "to bring together in the same place people who need each other but worship different household gods." Additionally, the term connotes how people know that they are in the center of a place. The center is "the place where all of you feel that the moment for confronting difference occurs;" the turf that people have fought and suffered for. For the Greeks, this place was the agora, their central marketplace.

The earliest recorded uses of the term 'public' in English identifies it with the common good in society; Malory in 1470 spoke of "the emperor Lucyos . . . dictatour or procurour of the publyke wele of Rome." By the end of the nineteenth century, 'public' referred to something "open to the scrutiny of anyone, whereas 'private' meant a sheltered region of life defined by one's family and friends; thus Steele, in an issue of *Tatler* in 1709, 'These effects . . . upon the publick and private actions of men', and Butler in *Sermons* (1726), 'Every man is to be considered in two capacities, the private and the publick.'

In the Renaissance, the French used the term *le public* to refer to the common good, the body politic, and ultimately an arena of sociability. Notions of who the public was and what it meant to be 'out in public' had broadened by the eighteenth century. In both London and Paris, the bourgeois became more open about their social origins and interacted with a more diverse group of strangers. By the time the word 'public' had evolved to its modern meaning it referred to not only a region of social life separate from family and close friends, but also that this sphere of acquaintances included a diversity of people.

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6 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 17.
In the eyes of the great social theorist Hannah Arendt, the public signifies two closely linked phenomena. First, things seen and heard in the public have the widest possible audience; they can be seen and heard by everybody. It is "appearance," something that is seen and heard by us and others simultaneously, that constitutes reality. Arendt has argued: "Since our feeling for reality depends utterly upon appearance and therefore the existence of a public realm into which things can appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence, even the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm."10

Second, the public is the world itself, in that it is common to all of us in terms of the physical world (earth and nature) as well as man-made things and human affairs. "To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time...The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is admitted to present itself in only one perspective."11 For Arendt, commonality is the crux of the public realm.

Richard Sennett, the renowned urban sociologist, equates the modern concept of public with the ancient Roman concept of res publica, which he defines as "those bonds of association and mutual commitment which exist between people who are not joined together by ties of family or intimate association..."12 Sennett argues that a public space is any place that causes people to interact who otherwise would not have reason to and that its purpose should be to make people aware "of economic, racial, and ethnic realities, by concentrating and mixing these realities together."13 Further, the public realm should not only bring people together, but that once in a common space they should interact verbally.14 Referring back to the Greeks, "You can't have a public realm, you can't have synoikismos, if people don't exchange with one another..."15

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11 Ibid., p. 7.
12 Sennett, p. 3.
14 Ibid., p. 58.
Sennett asserts that the contemporary public realm, like the city itself, is in a state of decay. He attributes the decline, in part, to the fact that "to know oneself has become an end, instead of a means through which one knows the world." 16 In addition, he argues that designers and planners too often narrow their concept of the public realm to include only amenities, "and in doing so, we narrow the concept of 'public' considerably." The result is that "we often wind up with an ersatz parade of our social, and, in particular, our ethnic differences." 17 Sennett thus represents the perspective that the public realm is embodied in places that promote interaction between strangers.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE DEFINITION OF THE PUBLIC REALM**

All governmental agencies and departments that work on behalf of the general citizenry base their policies and decisions on their assessment of what is in the best interest of the public. The fields of urban planning and urban design, being concerned with the physical development of cities and their environments, express their actions on behalf of the public interest in relation to what is called the public realm. As I have demonstrated, reaching a clear and agreed upon definition of exactly what this term means is an ambitious task. In its most generic sense, the public realm is the collection of physical spaces to which the quality of 'publicness' can be attributed. It is the physical manifestation of the public interest which every person, as a member of a community of any size, interacts with, utilizes, and reacts to on a daily basis.

Planning boards, departments, and agencies of all types, whether they address issues of transportation, housing, economic development, the natural environment, infrastructure, open spaces or urban design, are the primary guardians of the public realm. They are on the front lines. The Los Angeles City Planning Department's official mission statement reads: "The Department of City Planning recommends and carries out actions to plan and guide growth, to regulate use of land, and to integrate land use, transportation and housing in a balanced manner. Our mission is to promote the social, economic, environmental and aesthetic well-being of the people of Los Angeles." 18 Nowhere in this statement do we find the terms 'public' or 'public realm', yet the "well-being of the people" embodies the

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16 Sennett, p. 4.
17 Hitt, p. 58.
same implied responsibility. On the other extreme, the BCDC charter states explicitly its role as a defender of the public realm.

The importance of how the public realm is defined is based on the fact that implicitly encompassed within its definitional boundaries are a variety of components that determine both the quality and equity of the planning and eventual form of our urban landscape. These include:

◊ **Constituency Participation**: Those who will be included in the decision-making process. Each determination of the boundaries of what is public suggests a unique selection of constituencies expected to be affected by a particular development and thus which should be included in its planning. No matter how inclusive a process might attempt to be, the parameters of 'inclusion' will ultimately be subjective.

◊ **Constituency Representation**: On whose behalf decisions are supposedly being made. If, for example, an operational definition of the public realm does not include the issue of architectural style, the individuals who consider themselves advocates for the regulation of that component of the design process will not have their concerns sufficiently advocated.

◊ **Distribution of Benefits and Impacts**: Areas or constituents that should bear the negative impacts of a new project or gain from a new amenity. If, for example, as is the case in many cities, the operational definition of the 'public' includes only those residents who will vote in future elections, the distribution of LULU's (locally unwanted land uses) and amenities (perhaps a library) will be along those same lines.

◊ **Quality of the Physical Product**: Potential beneficial aspects of the physical form of cities such as pedestrian friendliness, architectural unity, preservation of view corridors, etc., all of which are components of urban design, can only be advocated if it is determined that they offer contributions to the general welfare of a city's residents. If these qualities are not considered part of the public realm, the regulatory process may not provide for such elements to be addressed by the representative system and they will thus be left to the free market.

◊ **Vision For the City**: Determining a shared notion of what the desired product is and how it can be produced for a particular area, by a certain point in time. The process of
creating and carrying out this series of long-term goals for an urban region is directly
determined by the assessment of the above-mentioned issues; who should be part of the
process, who should the product be serving, who should bear the costs, and what
comprises a 'good' product.

**DIFFICULTIES IN DEFINING THE PUBLIC REALM**

Given the evolving definition of the public realm, and the understanding that planning
agencies and boards base their policies on what actions would best serve its interests, it is
evident that how the public realm is defined dramatically influences planning policy-
making. If a standardized definition of the public realm were utilized throughout the urban
planning profession, an assessment of the appropriateness of that definition might be quite
simple. Not surprisingly though, and as demonstrated through the example of the BCDC,
there is often very little agreement on its definition even within specialized decision-making
committees. In many cases this ambiguity stems, at least partially, from the lack of effort
to create a unified vision for who should be served, by what means, and to what ends,
other factors also play a role.

Most significantly, difficulty arises because a variety of qualities can be considered as
criteria for a space to be public. Upon asking ten random people on the street what they
think of as the most public space in their city, it is likely that eight to ten different responses
will be given. Answers might include: the town common, a park, the shopping mall, the
baseball park, the beach, a major commercial street, or a particular civic building like city
hall. Pursuing the same line of questioning, asking what qualities of the spaces and places
they mentioned contribute to their publicness, an equally broad and even more nebulous set
of issues is sure to arise.\(^{19}\) These may include:

- **Safety:** If the space is safe enough that people feel free to go there. How is the safety
  of a space measured when there are disparate standards of what this term means?

- **Access:** How easy it is to get to, how easy is it to enter once you get to it, and how
  broad a selection of the city's residents can both get to and enter it. This addresses the
  issues of whether or not there are costs for entry, times that it closes, entrance criteria

\(^{19}\) Five informal surveys conducted by the author in Cambridge, Massachusetts in March, 1993,
serve as the foundation for these proposed responses.
such as religious affiliation or ethnicity, dress requirements, membership, geographical location, and any number of characteristics that might act as psychological inhibitors or barriers. Are some of the aspects that determine a space's accessibility inherently more crucial to the publicness of a space than others?

◊ **Use:** How free people are to behave as they wish once they are in the space. No physical space in a city is free from restrictions on behavior, but there are of course some places where restrictions are minimal. For example, there has been an on-going legal debate over the publicness of shopping malls based on whether or not limitations can be placed on peoples' first amendment rights when inside a mall. Should a person have the right to hand out political literature or stage a political rally inside the corridors of a privately owned mall?

◊ **Ownership:** If the space is owned by a private party or by some form of the government and is thus publicly owned. Can a privately owned piece of property function as a more public space than a publicly owned space?

◊ **Participation in its Creation:** The role members of the general citizenry played in the design and planning process that created the space. For some people, the fact that they or other members of the so-called general public had been involved in the planning process of a space gives them a sense of ownership or proprietorship that suggests a public quality in their minds. Are two public parks, one that was designed and constructed solely by a private firm on behalf of the city, and one that was designed and constructed by members of the local community spaces, of equal publicness?

The variation of individual notions of what the 'public' or 'public realm' is can be attributed to the reliance of these terms on the inherently relative variables of time and place, personal perspective (based on from cultural background, political leaning, and stake in the quality of the city), and a series of dynamic forces that comprise a city's planning, design and development.
IMPLICATIONS OF LACKING A CONSENSUAL DEFINITION

For a planning board or agency the potential implications of lacking an agreed upon definition of the public realm can be compared to a General who is responsible for protecting the residents of his city from enemies attacking from beyond its perimeter. How well can the General fulfill his duty if he is unclear what the boundaries of his city are? Regardless of whether he relies on an under- or over-estimation of the city's boundaries, resources will be used inefficiently and at least some of the residents will be inadequately protected.

The General's dilemma is analogous to that confronting our cities' planning agencies, the primary defenders of our public realm. The undefined boundaries of the city that must be confronted are the same ambiguous boundaries between the private and public realms that the planning profession must address. Commissions like the Boston Civic Design Commission similarly have limited resources (money, staff and time), imperfect information, and a responsibility to serve all of the city's residents equally. Given these constraints, how well can our declared guardians of the public realm fulfill their charge if they are not able to clearly define or agree what it is? And without a solid line of defense, who and what forces are we allowing to act unrestrained on the public realm?

Although there is an inherently ambiguous quality to the concept of the public realm, it is only within the last forty to fifty years that no singularly accepted notion has prevailed. In Europe, going back as far as medievalism, the streets, the marketplace, and the parks comprised the substance of the public realm. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bourgeois residents of capital cities like London, Paris, and Vienna expressed themselves publicly through promenades in grand parks or along boulevards lined with uniform façades. In the New World metropolises of New York and Chicago, crowds carried out business and shopping along commercial streets while packing the beaches and parks for leisure.

Throughout the centuries and across the oceans, a singular socially-understood distinction between the private and public spheres was maintained. Streets, parks, and publicly owned buildings, together comprising a civic public realm, reinforced the demarcation. The distinction persisted because high levels of informal social control facilitated the public behavior of the relatively homogeneous populations. In American cities, where great waves of immigrants disembarked, the ghettoization of the newcomers and the imposition
of more stringent controls on behavior manifested in the City Beautiful's civic spaces stabilized public expression.

In stark contrast, the contemporary American city is characterized by unrivaled heterogeneity and a concurrent diminution of social control. Social fragmentation of mass culture now prevails as the defining trend. The devastation wrought by Urban Renewal proved to be the apogee of miscalculations by the planning profession of what the public realm is, what value it has, and who should be involved in guiding its form. It is the residue of this disaffection embodied in grassroots and institutionalized citizen participation that precludes the resurrection of the traditional notion of a singular public realm.

Compensating for the depletion of an effective system of informal social control is a dramatic expansion of private control over the public environment. Coinciding with this expansion is the evolution of new forms of the public realm distinguished by unsurpassed levels of control. An effort by the public sector to regain control and thus recreate a city defined by traditional public values has led policy-makers to guide the form of the public realm based on archetypes of private extensions of control. The product is a depleted civic realm accompanied by a narrowed conception of what it means for a space to be public. There is thus a need to recognize that there are now multiple forms of the public realm. The sooner we concede our inability to maintain a singular ideal of the public realm, the sooner we can embrace efforts to improve the quality of its emerging forms. As long as we adhere to this romantic ideal, the effects on city form and the quality of urban life as shaped by the dominant forms of the public realm will go neglected.

I have begun to set the foundation for understanding the inextricable link between how the public realm is defined and what the future quality and equity of our cities will be. It is my assertion that the concurrent trends of increased extension of private control over the public environment and the erosion of the traditional civic public realm are together altering the predominant societal notion of what 'public' means and thus ushering in new, highly controlled forms of the public realm. To sharpen the functional definition of the public realm, I will explore these two phenomena in depth. A case study of Universal CityWalk, a current commercial development in Los Angeles, will serve to elucidate the elements of the emerging private public realm. The erosion of the traditional civic public realm will be explored through an investigation of how the conventional constraints of social control are being subverted by forces related to fear, technology, market segmentation, and the pursuit of a sense of community.
CHAPTER TWO

CITYWALK: PROMOTION OF THE PRIVATE
If you get too much off on the tangent of an idealized world, like Corbu with the tall slabs and the park in between, you end up with Pruitt Igoe that had to be dynamited because it didn't work. But that was an idealized vision of the future.  

The first page of CityWalk's press kit boasts, "Stamped with the Southland's own unique excitement, Universal CityWalk will serve as a model for the next generation of entertainment-oriented, mixed-use developments. It will feature a unique four-block-long mosaic of many of Southern California's outstanding cultural, culinary, retail and architectural amenities. The result is a 'people place' that brings forth some of the sensations, sights and sounds for which L.A. is best known. . . Universal CityWalk is destined to become L.A.'s premier destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment."  

More prosaically, CityWalk is a $100 million, four-block outdoor pedestrian mall opening in May 1993, built by the MCA Development Company on its Universal City headquarter property. As the initial component of a comprehensive development scheme for the project's 430 acres, it will include a series of shops, restaurants, cafes, and theaters designed to mimic some of the most popular entertainment spots in Los Angeles, including façades from Melrose Avenue, billboards from Sunset Strip, and even Venice Beach. Conceived by the planning staff at MCA and architect Jon Jerde, and inspired by the writings of Ray Bradbury, CityWalk will attempt to offer a unique version of a Los Angeles street.  

It is perhaps this same uniqueness that has contributed to the lack of consensus over what exactly CityWalk is. The project's design and development staff call it, in turn: a mall, outdoor pedestrian mall, promenade, festival marketplace, and a simulated urban street. When asked what label is appropriate for the project, CityWalk's manager of public relations answered, "We have this problem when we talk about our p.r. or marketing, which is, what to call it."  

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Despite this 'problem' about the project's identity, its designers have clearly attempted to recreate the quintessential Los Angeles street. According to one of the collaborating designers, "The original intention is that it would become a real street; we have tried to maintain as much of the reality of the street as possible."\(^{23}\) Anna Vernez Moudon, in her anthology *Public Streets For Public Use*, has argued: "More than any other element of the urban infrastructure, streets both record and determine the history of city form."\(^{24}\) In agreement, Eichner and Tobey assert: "Of all the designed elements of the urban environment, the street most reflects the quality of city life. It is the means by which we judge a city's prosperity, sense of grandeur or quaintness, review its history, count its opportunities, and determine its character. In short, from the street, we read the message of the city."\(^{25}\)

If the street is a measure of the quality of city life what is 'the message' of Universal CityWalk in Los Angeles? What does the simulation of a street convey about our contemporary desires for public space? CityWalk not only presents a significant prototype, but more importantly, it also illustrates the private development forces most actively shaping the public realm.

**The History**

The story always seems to start with a chicken farm. It is commonplace in Los Angeles to learn that a site was once either a chicken farm or an orange grove, before land speculation and intensive real estate development swiftly reshaped the landscape. The story of Universal Studios is no different.

It was in 1912, when the nickelodeon was popular, that Carl Laemmle founded the Universal Film Manufacturing Company in a cluster of tiny offices in New York City. For the next two years, Laemmle managed modest production facilities on both the east and west coasts until, with the purchase of a 230-acre chicken farm in North Hollywood for

$165,000, he consolidated his operations into one giant Southern California facility. Ground was broken on June 8, 1914.

Planting his facility upon a hill overlooking the surrounding city and its endless sea of orange groves, Laemmle needed to install an infrastructure to make the site operational. He added water, sewage, power, and paved a mile-long road up from the base of the hill. Demonstrating the company's entrepreneurial character, he also constructed offices, shops and state-of-the-art production facilities.

At the official grand opening of the studio on March 15, 1915, Thomas Edison started up the studio's electrical equipment, which he himself had designed. More than 10,000 sightseers were witness as the Los Angeles frontier (and the west coast, for that matter) was formally pioneered by the film industry. It was there and then that Universal truly established its "promise to entertain."26

Soon after its opening, Universal became the world's busiest studio. Its growth continued during World War II, and in response to government regulation limiting wartime profit, much of the excess earnings were spent on capital improvements, including the construction of two sound stages, the enlargement of existing studio buildings, and the improvement of the site's roads. After the war, Universal kept pace with the rapidly evolving technology of the film industry and prepared for entry into the second half of the century with the wholesale use of Technicolor in all of its projects. As technology expanded so did the company. On October 1, 1946 Universal merged with International Pictures. Foreshadowing the frenzy of mergers and acquisitions that typified the industry more than two decades later, MCA purchased the studio in its entirety, land and facilities, in 1959.

Following a three-year transition period during which a lease-back arrangement operated, MCA purchased Universal Pictures and Decca Records outright in 1962, thus fully consolidating motion picture, television, and recording entities. Led by the stewardship of Jules Stein and Lew Wasserman, MCA had aggregated a massive entertainment complex headquartered at Universal City.

Continuing a path of growth and expansion, MCA began to upgrade its property and facilities while increasing its television production capabilities. During the following three decades, and over a succession of eight master plans for the property, the company added a 15-story MCA headquarters office building, fourteen new sound stages, two Technicolor processing plants accompanied by several new office structures, three hotels, restaurants, the Universal Amphitheater, and the 18-screen Cineplex Odeon.27

Reviving Carl Laemmle's practice of allowing visitors to watch the films being made, a practice maintained until the "talkies" made quiet on the set a necessity, a studio tour was established in 1964. Although the authentic quality of the tour was lost (visitors no longer view actual films being created), the tour has continually expanded. Over five million people come to Universal City annually to witness the "industrial exhibit" known as the tour.28 The alteration in the format of the tour represented a shift in Universal's orientation from merely making films to telling about the making of films. Today, visitors from around the nation and the globe flock to the highly-touted Universal Studios Tour, Hollywood, to experience the magic and mystery of movie-making.29

The Tour is much more of a theme park that one experiences via tram rather than an actual tour. Simulated disasters including an earthquake, a flood, and attacks by King Kong and Jaws comprise the substance of the attraction. In addition to these mock calamities, glitzy stage shows feature characters from popular Universal Films. At the tour's conclusion, visitors are unloaded amidst an array of souvenir shops peddling replications of popular film characters and movie memorabilia. Although the trams do take people by the functioning sound stages and bungalows, visitors who make the pilgrimage hoping to catch a glimpse of a film star or famous director such as George Lucas or Steven Spielberg are disappointed.

The Jerde Partnership has recently been hired to do its second master plan for an MCA that has recently been purchased (along with its Universal holdings) by Matsushita, a Japanese conglomerate. In a departure from past attempts to turn the Universal City site into a series of golf courses, a ring of office buildings with a fashion center in the middle, or a massive

28 James Nelson, (Interview by author).  
29 The word "Hollywood" has been added to its title as a result of the creation of its recent Florida counterpart in Orlando.
Figure 2.1 Marketing images for Universal City, California.
Figure 2.2 Pruitt-Igoe. The world's most notorious high-rise housing project soon after its opening -- and at the moment of its demolition.
commercial center where the backlot now stands, Jerde has approached it as a future "Entertainment City." According to MCA Development's director of planning and development, Jerde was hired because, "he was the only guy who didn't give us planning lectures."

Jerde, principal of the Jerde Partnership, Inc. in Venice, California, is best known for his work as the designer of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, but he has also received more recent acclaim for his design of Horton Plaza in San Diego. He has sat on the Mayor's Design Advisory Panel, contributed to the L.A. Vision 2000 Committee, and acted as Vice President of the Urban Design Advisory Coalition. His additional projects in Los Angeles include the Westside Pavilion, the Glendale Galleria II, and downtown's Citicorp Plaza Seventh Market Place.

Speaking in early 1993 at a conference at UCLA, "L.A. Architecture Comes of Age," Jerde said that he sees the Los Angeles architect's prime task to be creating an environment where Angelenos can mingle and share a sense of common identity in a city with rare opportunities for spontaneous interaction. His tool is the shopping center. Jerde asserted that shopping malls are "the only popular meeting grounds in our all-too-private and socially ghettoized urban environment. I found these places to be the starting pieces in an ambitious plan to create a sense of community. Twenty-five million people a year now visit Horton Plaza. Surveys have found that more than half of them simply come to mingle."30 Speaking at the same conference, Cesar Pelli summed up his own view, and indirectly supported Jerde's work, by saying, "I'd hate to say that L.A. has come of age, or ever will. The city's eternal adolescence has given our designers a rare freedom to experiment, free of the burdens of a false maturity."31

Jerde's plan for Universal City is centered upon creating a skyline on its hill in the form of an arc. The arc will be formed by developing lower buildings at the edges, taller buildings on the summit, and parking garages terracing the hill. All future development will occur

30 Eric Owen Moss, speaking directly after Jerde at this symposium said, "The only thing I'm sure of is that I'm utterly opposed to Jerde's ideas." Source: Leon Whiteson, "L.A. Architecture: Trashy Sophistication?," Los Angeles Times, Section K, February 14, 1993, p. 6.

Figure 2.3 Marketing images for Horton Plaza in San Diego, California.
Figure 2.4 (top) Universal City and its components before construction of CityWalk. Figure 2.5 (bottom) Conceptual master plan for Universal City.
within this framework, evolving over fifty or so years into an identifiable icon on the horizon to form the Universal City which currently does not exist.\textsuperscript{32}

To accomplish these ambitious ends, Jerde seeks to encourage a spatial variety by diverging from the common grid template of American cities. CityWalk will be the first component of the new development, and will serve as the spine that links the cineplex with the studio tour. According to James Nelson, Director of Planning and Development for MCA Development, Jerde had remarked, "The thing that is missing is a pedestrian spine to tie it all together and a sense of where it's going." That was his vision; the pedestrian spine is CityWalk.\textsuperscript{33} The concept for CityWalk was not solely Jerde's. Aside from the contributions of other designers and the MCA staff after the initial proposal, Jerde's history of collaboration with science-fiction author Ray Bradbury also played a significant role.\textsuperscript{34}

Best known for his literary works \textit{Fahrenheit 451} and \textit{The Martian Chronicles}, the "Bradbury Theater" television series, and a number of movie screenplays, Ray Bradbury has also consulted on and written essays about an array of built-environment issues in Los Angeles. A great admirer of Walt Disney, Bradbury thinks of himself and Jerde as "Disney's children."\textsuperscript{35} He particularly admired Disney's vision for the urban landscape and his standards for developing products of only the highest quality. Reflecting the influence of Disneyland's Main Street U.S.A., Bradbury's essay, "The Girls Walk This Way; The Boys Walk That Way," offers a scheme for a prototypical block that would reinvigorate the public life of our dying cities. Mourning the fact that in Los Angeles "we have forgotten how to gather," his plan aspires to a space "where we might meet as in the old days, and walk and shop and sit and talk and simply stare."\textsuperscript{36}

To create his vision for the L.A. of tomorrow, one which he admits is based on the Los Angeles of his childhood in the 1930s, Bradbury envisions eighty or ninety of these blocks throughout the city. At the center of each prototypical block, a round bandstand or stage would be surrounded by a sitting pit for 400 people. Encompassing this would be a "huge plaza walk" where hundreds stroll. Surrounding the whole, a quadrangle of three dozen

\textsuperscript{32} Richard Orne, Senior Associate, The Jerde Partnership, Inc. (Interview by author), January 14, 1993. This arc form is inspired by Jerde's project on a new town outside of Paris, France.
\textsuperscript{33} James Nelson, (Interview by author).
\textsuperscript{34} According to Ray Bradbury, Jerde and Bradbury used to meet once a week at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast and visionary brainstorming.
\textsuperscript{35} Ray Bradbury, Author. (Interview by author), January 16, 1993.
shops and stores that all face the conversation pit. He carefully specifies the shops and stores: a pizza shop, a delicatessen, a malt shop, a burger joint, a candy shop, a spaghetti cafe, a stationer, three bookstores, a hardware store, an art shop, a gallery, a record store, a magic shop, a toy store, and a tobacconist. Each of the four corners of the block would have a theater as an anchor, each featuring a different attraction. The parking would be hidden beneath it all.

Upon describing his scheme, Bradbury admits, "Good grief! you cry, what's so new about that!? Nothing, I reply, sadly. It's so old it now must become new again."37 Most of the elements of his solution, he confesses, already exist in L.A., such as along Hollywood Boulevard and the Sunset Strip, but the automobile ruins "any chance of a real encounter."38 He also notes that Olvera Street fulfills many of his requirements, as does Disneyland, "You can indeed sit, eat, lounge and stare at Uncle Walt's, but you don't really go there to shop, and it isn't a community center, but a Southern California asset."39 Even a brief study of the plans for CityWalk reveals the influence of Bradbury's fifteen-page essay on a $100 million commercial development.

CityWalk, by its evolution and very existence, reveals how the concept of the public realm and the form of our cities are evolving in response to extensions of private control. Four primary characteristics of this project illustrate emerging trends in the public environment:

◊ **Simulation:** the artificial recreation of experiences through a variety of image-producing mechanisms;

◊ **Distillation:** the extraction of the essence of places or experiences and their artificial relocation in a concentrated form;

◊ **Theming:** the organization of programmed activities and physical attributes for a space, each component of which is a variation of a common element; and

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Discrimination: the process of selection that limits access often through entrance requirements, high levels of security, and marketing the product to defined population segments.40

40 These characteristics are not mutually exclusive, yet each deserves a separate investigation.
Figure 2.6 (top) CityWalk as the connecting spine.
Figure 2.7 (bottom) Model of CityWalk in MCA Development's office overlooking the hill of Universal City.
SIMULATION

Something that is simulated has assumed the appearance or form of something else; it is a copy or imitation. "Simulation" in this paper refers to the deliberate attempt to recreate (usually as closely as possible) an experience foreign to a particular location. The most renowned contemporary simulated environment is Disneyland's Main Street, a seven-eighths scale reproduction of one team of designers' image of the typical, traditional American main street. Main Street is not one place, but an image of the ubiquitous traditional American public realm.

A slightly more subtle example is Faneuil Hall Marketplace on the Boston waterfront, which attempts to transport the shopper to a traditional nineteenth-century New England marketplace through renovated historic structures to create a contemporary version of the urban marketplace. Scores of imitations can be found nationally that also use historical imagery to simulate the past, another place, a foreign landscape, a view, an experience, or a piece of the city. Regardless of the form they take, such projects inherently require a conscious extension of control and usually result in an alteration and/or sanitization of the original.

Los Angeles is often characterized as an environment deeply rooted in fantasy. This characterization can refer to the way the city grew or what the city is producing. Both variables are part of the illusion-based formula that is L.A. Its evolution is distinguished by a series of booms -- whether from the film industry, oil drilling, aerospace industry, or Pacific Rim finance -- which, when combined with the temperate climate, created the notion that it was a land of plentiful opportunity. Furthermore, the city of Los Angeles grew at an enormous pace on land not naturally conducive to sustaining anything more than a village. Water, the lifeblood of the city, had to be imported by seizing moister lands hundreds of miles away. It is a city where there should be no city.

But Los Angeles not only created itself by overcoming ecological reality, it also became home to the production of technological magic: the celluloid images known as movies. The
Figure 2.8 (top) Walt Disney presiding over a model of the future Main Street U.S.A. at Disneyland.

Figure 2.9 (middle) Main Street as it was built in Anaheim, California.

Figure 2.10 (bottom) The traditional city as a place for civic ceremonies: Boston’s Faneuil Hall Marketplace.
inventiveness and entrepreneurial nature of the early illusion moguls took the city along a path of development parallel to that of the movie studios. The creation of CityWalk and the entire Universal City complex is just one more step in this process of city-building. CityWalk can be seen as one more unfolding of concentric illusion-based environments, each relying on the existence of the others for its sustenance: CityWalk within Universal City within Los Angeles. Upon hearing of CityWalk for the first time, Kevin Starr, a professor of urban planning at the University of Southern California, was disturbed and outraged. Later he conceded, "In Los Angeles, illusion is the reality, so why worry?" One of the key players in its development concurred: "L.A. is a place where people are free to try and live their fantasies. The reality is that it is a fantasy-based place. But is there anything wrong with the land of dreams?"

What aspects of the history and nature of Hollywood does CityWalk express? The development based on images heavily reliant on simulation. CityWalk, by its mere creation and in the manner in which it was produced will be attempting to simulate three central elements: the experience of the street, the dynamic passage of time, and the quintessence of Los Angeles. Because the subsequent section on "distillation" covers providing the quintessence of L.A., I will deal here only with the first two simulated elements in CityWalk.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE STREET

According to Craig Hodgetts, project architect, "I don't think there is a prayer that it will feel like a real street. The big questions to me are whether it will be rich enough that you'll want to come back, or whether it's so focused, such a one-liner, that you won't come back. If you don't come back, then it's going to fail. If it doesn't take root as a thing that people want to come back to, feel comfortable coming back to, feel like it's part of their routine, I don't think it will make it." If CityWalk is an overly simplistic, sanitized version of 'reality', it may lack a unique appeal. Yet, if it is too 'real', then it may lose its advantage over the traditional public environment to attract visitors. It is this search for

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42 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
43 Craig Hodgetts, Architect, Harmonica (Interview by author), January 12, 1993.
equilibrium, a point obtained by adjusting the level of control, that CityWalk's designers set as a task for themselves. They went about doing it in three ways.

First, the designers tried to balance these issues to achieve the most appropriate simulation of the form of a Los Angeles urban street. Because streets can be defined by numerous criteria such as their function, morphology, symbolism, or legal parameters no consensus exists as to the essential formula. Asked whether or not it would be a real street, Richard Orme, senior designer on the project answered:

It is and it isn't. Because we are creating a new animal here, there have to be some conventions that are familiar in order for this thing to be successful. So when you say street or promenade, it is by all definitions of the word, a street. CityWalk in and of itself is a street. It has a certain number of components that are familiar to a street. It is not the kind of street that you would expect in any other portion of the city. If you intended to say it is to be a Melrose, it is to be a La Brea or Sunset, then it will of course seem artificial.44

The designers have created an entity composed of two linear sets of storefronts that run for approximately 1,500 feet. Between them lies an open space that will be utilized primarily for pedestrian movement and ingress/egress to activities behind the 27 façades. About as long as the stretch of Rodeo Drive from Wilshire to Santa Monica Boulevards, approximately one-quarter mile, CityWalk will be lined with nearly 200,000 s.f. of gross leasable space, devoted primarily to retail uses and supplemented by institutional and office uses on the upper floors.45

CityWalk is a street closed to all wheeled vehicles, but will serve to bring visitors from the over 8,500 parking spaces to the entrance gate of the Universal Studios Tour. The two 'blocks' of West Street, as it is called, funnel traffic into an area referred to as the Central Court, the functional equivalent of an intersection. The Central Court, a circular open space lined primarily with restaurants, will also provide ingress/egress to structured parking via an escalator or a bare-walled path to a surface lot. On the east side of the court, what is merely a suggestion of the future East Street leads pedestrians to the 18-theater cineplex.

With slight changes in elevation, yet handicapped accessible, West Street has been designed with an occasional set of three or four steps to compensate for the grade change.

44 Richard Orme, (Interview by author).
Figure 2.11 CityWalk, its anchors, and the accompanying parking.
Figure 2.12 (top) Universal City location.
Figure 2.13 (bottom) Universal City site plan including CityWalk.
Figure 2.14 (top) Computer-generated model highlighting the Central Court.
Figure 2.15 (middle) First-level floor plan.
Figure 2.16 (bottom) Second-level floor plan.
The storefronts lining either side of West Street rise to an average three-stories in height except where punctuated by one of the two towers modeled after Los Angeles' old Atlantic Richfield building which rise more than five stories. Together these elements constitute the simulated street.

Another tool the designers utilized to create an allusion to the experience of the street is the selection of the amenities and details on this linear space. The promotional brochure boasts, "An array of awnings, trellises, canopies and trees will create aesthetically pleasing shady areas. Lush native and tropical plant life will be abundant along the promenade and CityWalk's exterior. Vines and ivies will be flowering, providing seasonal change in colors and shapes." Although most streets in Los Angeles are not landscaped so lushly (especially during the past few years of severe drought), the emphasis on greenery and shade suggests an image that many of the city's residents hold as their ideal. The north side of West Street will appropriately offer this lushness, while the naturally more shaded south side will offer landscaping more reminiscent of the Los Angeles basin's natural ecology, such as cacti.

Charlie White, an animator and a consultant to Jerde's office, reiterated the attempt to simulate street life: "The real idea of this place at one time was to make it like a real city street. There were even going to be billboards and they were going to sell the space to advertisers. But it [CityWalk] transcended the original intent of making it like an L.A. city street; it was going to have benches on it and cobra lamps." For this designer and urban dweller, the aspects that provide the quality of 'streetness' come in the form of the detail from functional street appurtenances. The cobra lamps that blight most American cities (as imposed by engineering standards), will not be found here, but CityWalk will feature a number of authentic-period light standards, which are being custom-fabricated "to reflect a historical overview of street lighting in Los Angeles. By nightfall, CityWalk will dramatically come alive with a lighting plan that includes crackle-tube neon, cove and accent lighting, towers with theatrical lighting, and light-refracting panels which deflect splashes of color throughout the plazas."47

Other elements generally associated with streets but that will not be part of the final design are sidewalks, curbs, cars, and street corners. Charlie White, again pondering the nature

47 Ibid.
of this new 'street', remarked, "No street corners? How can you have a street without corners?"48 Along with many of the other simulated 'authenticating' elements, such as the billboards, the lamps, sidewalks, benches, and manholes, MCA opted for a more tame version of the street. White suggested, "If they really wanted it to be a public street it would have more of a street atmosphere -- bus benches, billboards, manholes. Now it is getting fancier and cuter. So there will be benches, but they'll be artsy. Now it is too pretty and too new. It got more designy, more self-conscious."

The context of a real city street is the third element the designers simulated to create the effect of an urban street. Although the project does take place in an area functionally considered the City of Los Angeles, the site itself is not fully urban.49 Yet it is here, on a hill overlooking the San Fernando Valley and the Cahuenga Pass, that a new piece of Los Angeles streetscape is being artificially created.

According to senior project designer Richard Orne, "We did not set out to say we are going to recreate Melrose or recreate La Brea or any other of those famous districts. We said we are going to use them as informing devices to create a simulated environment that would be informed by and use some of those as clues."50 In that way, CityWalk is successful; it simulates aspects of the surrounding city to create a new environment. According to James Nelson, Jerde's first attempt at a design for the project was what he called "Euroville," a style reminiscent of his now famous Horton Plaza which relies heavily on European themes. But Nelson told Jerde, "This is Los Angeles, so it's got to be L.A. architecture. But what is L.A. architecture? A hodge podge. Design a hodge podge where people will feel comfortable."51 From that point on, the designers relied upon this hybrid concept.

Transcending the use of the existing urban landscape as a reference, MCA will also attempt to create its own urban environment which will then supply CityWalk with a context. "The intent of the project was to create a little city. The only thing that it doesn't have that a real city would have is housing, but it has everything else."52 Ultimately, the goal is to provide the visitor a sufficient selection of images so he or she can experience the urbanity and

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49 West Street is bisected by the Los Angeles Municipal line. The two-thirds of Universal City that are not in the City of L.A. are in L.A. County and not incorporated.
50 Richard Orne, (Interview by author).
51 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
52 William Milsap, Vice President, Emmet L. Wemple and Associates (Interview by author), January 14, 1993.
Figure 2.17 The selected L.A. context: Melrose Avenue.
Figure 2.18 Additional selected context: Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica.
Figure 2.19 The rejected L.A. context. (top) The Beverly Center (a mall), Beverly Hills. (bottom) A homeless person across the street from the Beverly Center.
intensity of the street, yet feel secure. One designer said, "We tried to capture the quintessential experience of Los Angeles without replicating anything that we actually have here. We borrowed from existing L.A. iconography, trying to recreate the experience, the emotional response that you might get from some of those areas like Larchmont and Melrose." Image has become the new reality.

**THE EXPERIENCE OF DYNAMISM**

The other primary element of the urban experience that CityWalk attempts simulate is the experience of dynamism. Although consumers appear to demand perfectly maintained environments that offer an easily digestible experience, city-goers and tourists alike seem to prefer more complex, less sanitized places. People are most attracted to places where they feel secure, but where there is an air of unpredictability and intrigue. In his essay, "The Aesthetics of Lostness," Ray Bradbury uses the term "safely lost" to describe this sense. A primary factor in creating this feeling comes from a place's natural evolution over time which allows it to have been influenced by a variety of people over many years. This complexity is at the heart of the urban experience, and attracts people by the hoards when they can feel safe there. The astounding popularity of Pike's Place market in Seattle and Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston are profitable examples. These places offer the experience of elapsed time, evolved contribution, an element of unpredictability, yet an overriding sense of certainty that make them attractive. This is the experience of dynamism.

Despite an understanding of the potential attractiveness of urban complexity, developers continue to replicate the more traditional, sterilized, enclosed mall because it offers more predictable, easier-to-control investments. CityWalk, looking to the future, has tried to combine the best of both fabricated worlds by creating a new, comfortable, and clean environment that simulates the experience of a more complex, dynamic one.

The developers of CityWalk desire the dynamic element because they believe it is crucial to attracting repeat business from local residents. They must offer a unique experience each time a visitor returns so she will have reason to come back. In response to a question about the simplicity of typical malls, James Nelson responded, "I am hopeful that what we have

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53 John Levy, (Interview by author). These are both successful pedestrian streets full of shops and restaurants in the middle of residential neighborhoods.
created is just the exact opposite. Something that every time you go, you see something different; it never really gets routine because the thing gets a life of its own. That's if we have created the framework for that to happen. That will be a real achievement."54

Contradicting this aspiration, Richard Sennett has argued: "You can't program sociability. A working space requires that over time it will develop a history of use; you can't command enjoyment or vitality."55

The project's architecture served as one of the primary tools for achieving Nelson's goal. Through city-wide photographic essays conducted by a variety of the project architects, a system of 'organic' architectural layering was observed as a vital clue to a neighborhood's growth and evolution. Studying a storefront on La Brea Boulevard, for example, may teach the evolution of that particular structure as well as the evolution of the neighborhood. It may be seen that the base structure is an Art Deco office building, that it then became some sort of center for the Jewish community (as denoted by the residue of Hebrew characters behind where a sign once hung), and now serves a trendy restaurant in its ground floor and residential units above. This one structure speaks of changing architectural styles, local ethnic populations, real estate values and more. This is a naturally dynamic environment, a place that has a life of its own that defines its character and contributes to its intrigue and complexity.

Acknowledging the value in such dynamism, CityWalk attempts to design this quality into the project. "Our intention was to provide a snapshot of three generations of storefront."56 The result is a built-in eclecticism through this idea of 'layering', with façades that are intended to look like stucco boxes with layers applied onto them and storefronts overlapping to appear as a natural co-optation of the adjoining façade. Said Richard Orne, "Some of the buildings are designed as if an arcade had been added to an earlier building or are painted with a pre-faded look, but less so than I had wanted."57 Another building that 'was' all tile now has been partially layered with metal sheeting. As suggested by one project designer, "this all adds up to the architectural equivalent of artificial insemination."

The attempt to recreate the experience of dynamism did not stop with simulating past layering, but also attempted to encourage it naturally in the future. As Orne put it, "This is

54 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
55 Hitt, p. 53.
56 John Levy, (Interview by author).
57 Richard Orne, (Interview by author).
purposely not high-design architecture so that tenants can come in and do their own things, making a contribution to it. It will have its own life. As tenants move on, they will leave remnants behind which will be incorporated [by] the next tenant." As announced in the press kit, "Universal CityWalk's visual excitement is created by a bright array of retro-to-contemporary building facades. Each of these facades will be customized by the individual shop or restaurant to best represent the product or service offered within -- and the more off-beat and fresh the better." Even with the substantial move-in cost for designers to design their own façade, most of the design staff believes that a natural layering will occur. One consulting architect did express his cynicism though:

So Larry [Spungin, President of MCA Development] has been sold the idea that this thing will be like Melrose Avenue. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is like Melrose in the sense there has been a really sincere attempt to create an aggregate style. But at the same time I would say that Richard Orne has a very clear signature. Richard's architectural design is very pristine and very carefully detailed; extremely orderly even though it is eclectic. And so I think it's not the kind of gritty sensibility that perhaps Larry had been persuaded it was. It's eclectic, but it is ever so carefully executed.

In one of the early design iterations, gum wrappers had been placed in the cracks of the sidewalk so that the day the project opened it would have a worn and gritty feeling. Had MCA not rejected this proposal, CityWalk would have featured simulated wrappers in simulated cracks to simulate an evolved eclecticism. The vines and ivies on the Central Court trellis were meant to have had eighteen months to grow before the project's opening to give it a sense of maturity, but fire safety concerns made that unfeasible.

Craig Hodgetts said about CityWalk, "I think this is like an opera set. It's heroic, it's bigger than life, its geometry is really grand. Like a production of La Boheme, it is supposed to be about beatniks, but it is done in a grand sort of way." This sentiment raises the question of whether a place that markets itself as eclectic or bohemian can really be such. If the designers had really wanted the sense of history expressed through layering they could have built the same banal stucco boxes that proliferate throughout Los Angeles and let the tenants take it from there.
DISTILLATION

What we really want to achieve, is if you landed here in Los Angeles at LAX and you had only two hours to spend, you could come to CityWalk and leave having a sense of the city.\textsuperscript{58}

To distill means to obtain the essence or volatile properties contained in a substance, or to separate from one substance from another by such a process, with the goal of purifying or concentrating the substance. As it applies to the built-environment, this term means taking the essence or elements of one or more places or experiences and artificially concentrating them in a new place.

Such a result can be achieved through three primary means. One way is through a physical recreation. This co-optation would simulate an artifact or experience, perhaps at the original scale, and perfectly replicate its form and detail. A well-known historical example is the Roman Emperor Hadrian's villa, which was decorated with copies of many of the world's architectural wonders to display the cultural hegemony of the Roman Empire.

The second means of distillation exploits the power of the media to create illusion. One can recreate an experience utilizing media such as computer technology, television and film. While all films are inherently distillations of sights and sounds, current popular film formats like the IMAX films attempt both to transport the viewer to a far away place (the Swiss Alps perhaps) and to supply the sensation of participating in some exotic activity like Olympic downhill ski racing. Technology offers a viewer the physical experience of exhilaration, terror, or joy without having to leave his or her seat.

A third and less subtle, yet common means of distilling an environment is the literal, physical relocation of objects. The most renowned example of such relocation is Henry Ford's Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. In his homage to the 'common folk' and to the history of the self-made man, Ford initiated a search for thousands of artifacts to be displayed in an outdoor museum to be known as Greenfield Village. Accompanying the spoils was a collection of historic buildings that were dismantled, brought to the village,

\textsuperscript{58} John Levy, (Interview by author), repeating Jon Jerde.
and painstakingly reassembled, including an Illinois court house in which Lincoln practiced law and Orville Wright's bicycle shop. 59

Although this form of distillation relocates the actual coveted object, it is inevitable that many of its essential qualities will be lost in the relocation. The primary reason for this is context; the object was part of a context that cannot be perfectly replicated. Transporting the London Bridge to its new arid home in Lake Havasu City, Arizona did not preserve the context of London, England. Whether an object is physically transported or an experience is recreated through media, the goal of distillation is to concentrate the essence of an experience or place by recreating it in a new place.

One of the most intriguing aspects of CityWalk is its attempt to bring many of the best experiences and sights of Los Angeles into one location. Regardless of whether the reaction to such an idea is one of awe, excitement, bewilderment, or disgust, anyone who knows Los Angeles sees both the logic behind such a concept as well as at least a theoretical benefit from the achievement of such a feat. The city's important sights and experiences are dispersed so widely that they often go neglected by local residents. Thus, when a project offers to condense these attractions, bringing them to one destination, it promises benefits, if not a great potential for profit.

**Destinations Distilled**

In a glossy brochure proclaiming on its cover "Our universe is expanding..." above the logo of CityWalk, the ad beckons, "Where else can you enjoy the beach and boardwalk at Gladstone's, fall under the magic spell of Wizardz magic shop and dinner theater and delight in the charm and flavor of historic Olvera Street at Camacho's Cantina... all on the same street? Only Universal CityWalk will have it all." This declaration refers to two of the most recognizable destinations and major tourist attractions in the Los Angeles area.

Reference to the beach at Gladstone's kills two birds with one stone by making reference both to the beach, itself a significant destination, and Gladstone's restaurant in the Pacific


Overcoming the rejection of his offer to purchase Philadelphia's Independence Hall, Ford built a replica of it to serve as the museum's entrance.
Palisades, the highest-grossing restaurant in California. Although no boardwalk exists at the original Gladstone's 4 Fish, one will be created for the new restaurant at CityWalk. But the brochure is not lying, exactly, because there will be both a Gladstone's and a sand beach at CityWalk.

The existing Gladstone's, long since a landmark and destination for the Ray-Ban set, was established by Robert J. Morris, a well-known Southern California restaurateur. In an attempt to lasso a restaurant anchor to the project, MCA Development approached Morris. Although he was originally repelled by the concept of CityWalk and the idea of setting up shop there, he was persuaded otherwise after visiting Universal City and seeing the numbers of people who might some day crowd his restaurant.

The new restaurant and its nautical design will be "complete with a sand beach and patio, to bring the California beach experience to CityWalk." Said Morris, "We are going to bring the elements of the best of what a California beach experience is." The 'beach' that Morris refers to is a plot of sand at the end of a simulated wood plank boardwalk on which tables and chairs will allow patrons to drink and dine in a festive beach atmosphere, served by waitresses on roller-skates wearing scant uniforms. This space will also be programmed with exhibition volleyball matches and muscle-building competitions. Ms. Morris captured their project's essence in saying, "Seeing as though we are not near the ocean, we are going to have to create that illusion through the magic of Hollywood."

The second of the destinations that the brochure claims will be 'brought' to CityWalk is the famous and historic Olvera Street. While the brochure says that it is the "charm and flavor" of Olvera Street that will be available for consumption at CityWalk this is meant in an even

61 I was told through interviews with staff members of MCA that local residents expressed a strong demand for a seafood restaurant through a formal written survey they conducted. Thus the notion of Gladstone's at Universal was born. But in reading the survey, conducted by Fairbank, Bergman, and Maullin, I see that in fact that the answer to the question, "What would you say are your two favorite restaurants in the greater Los Angeles area?" provided a composite total of 7% that responded "seafood." Clearly, the selection of Gladstone's as the primary restaurant anchor was for reasons other than local resident's preferences for that cuisine.
64 Something that can only be done at CityWalk since it is illegal in California to have alcohol on any beach.
65 Kerry Morris, (Interview by author)
Figure 2.20 Model of the future Gladstones at Universal.
less literal way than the claims about Gladstone's. Olvera Street, located downtown across from the central train depot at Union Station, is certainly one of the most well-known and visited historic places in the city. The street, a portion of the early Mexican settlement, now serves as a recognized cultural fulcrum for the Mexican-American community.

The street itself essentially functions as a pedestrian shopping street where downtown workers who can afford a long lunch (usually government employees) can enjoy an inexpensive Mexican meal outside, or purchase a variety of Latino and Anglo-based ephemera and hand-crafted Mexican wares. It is a culturally organic oasis in the midst of auto-dominated, modern, shapeless expanse of grid. The promoters of CityWalk base their claim on the fact that an owner and operator of a restaurant on Olvera Street, Andy Camacho, will open Camacho's Cantina at CityWalk, a Mexican restaurant featuring imported artifacts, a live mariachi band, an exhibition kitchen, and traditional costumed employees.66

As a bonus to the shortened trip to Olvera Street, CityWalk will "transport you and your senses to Colonial Mexico."67 The trip to Colonial Mexico is, of course, only meant in a figurative way; it is the image of this place that is being marketed. Nonetheless, it is important and interesting that CityWalk is attempting to create a confluence of these images that will appeal to both the tourist and the local resident. Although the slogan speaks of an expanding galactic realm, the physical reality of the project is evidently pitching a contracted urban realm.

**Convenience Distilled**

Aside from transporting visitors over borders or through time, the project also tries to create a functioning mixed-use environment. All of the 27 facades will be filled at the ground-floor with either restaurants or retail shops (with the exception of the Panasonic Pavilion). Most of the retail shops are primarily merchandise-based, such as Crabtree and Evelyn, the Nature Company, Captain Coconuts (selling stuffed animals and toys), Things from Another World that sells comic books that customers can be drawn into, and Uniquely Kids that offers personalized children's clothing, but each is intended to provide

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67 Ibid.
a distinctly divergent experience from the typical mall store. An attempt was made to minimize the number of chain stores, those that were here are required to provide both a new façade and an attraction to spice up the store. In the case of the Nature Company, for example, a simulated rain forest will be housed within the store as a form both of entertainment and education.

There will also be a variety of stores that sell a product that is more of an experience than a piece of merchandise. Other offerings include: Out Takes, where visitors can get dressed up in costumes and have their photograph taken in a variety of scenes; Wizardz, a dinner theater that will have strolling magicians and magic items for sale; the Museum of Neon Art, temporarily defunct after having closed its downtown location due to lack of attendance, will disperse many of its holdings throughout the street as well as maintain a small exhibit space in its modest shop space; and the Panasonic Pavilion, designed in consultation with Steven Spielberg in the theme of a country fair, in which the only thing being peddled is the friendly public relations of the Matsushita Corporation and the Japanese corporate culture. All of these entertainment offerings are of course anchored by the Universal Studios tour and the Cineplex movie theater complex.

The upper floors are reserved for other uses. The 14-classroom UCLA Extension facility will be housed on the second and third floors of the structure on the north side of the street. The Extension will offer seventy courses primarily focused on entertainment industry related subjects, and expects to serve as many as 2,100 students per week. The rest of the upper-floor space will be devoted to offices, some of which will be utilized by MCA employees, some by people involved in the development, and the rest will be available for professional services.

ARCHITECTURE DISTILLED

But the above-mentioned locales are not the only places a visitor to CityWalk can expect to experience. One can also be taken to various sights of Los Angeles simultaneously through the vehicle of architectural styles. The architecture in this case will be offering an extremely condensed format, the quintessential Los Angeles architectural experience within less than a quarter of a mile promenade. As repeated throughout the project's promotional campaign, "CityWalk will be reflective of Los Angeles' architectural diversity, showcasing eclectic Southland styles such as Art Deco, Streamline Modern, 1950's Geodesic, Vernacular
Figure 2.21 Architectural diversity. (top) A retail and office façade. (bottom) Looking down West Street.
California Crazy and UCLA Collegiate, among many others. The result is a memorable collage of unique building styles. A wide variety of textures of materials including stucco, adobe, wood, metal, copper, terrazzo and glass will be used.\textsuperscript{68}

In order to collect images necessary to recreate an 'accurate' essence of the city, an extensive research process was carried out. In addition to numerous meetings of the different architects about which images should be used and how the images should be represented, separate architectural teams roamed the city to collect data. The team of lighting architects, for example, spent five full days visiting a variety of sections of the metropolitan area. One of the architects said, "We spent numerous days traveling through the city, photographing the facades of buildings, looking at their lighting... We went to Larchmont, Westwood, Sunset Boulevard, the Palisades, Culver City, and Inglewood, among other places."\textsuperscript{69}

Using the photographic essays the various groups compiled from their urban explorations, the development team (guided by the head architect) determined which images were essential attractive components of the Los Angeles architectural landscape. Are the images that this group of predominantly well-educated, architecturally trained, middle-age Caucasian males the same set of images a different group would have selected? It is not difficult to see that the set of images chosen and the criteria used could vary widely.

This unavoidable nature of the design process speaks to three important issues. First, it reveals that a distilled environment is based upon subjective choices. Any two persons' images of the city will differ. As Kevin Lynch's research articulated, the palette that we use to render our personal cognitive maps of our city is determined by a variety of factors, including our background, daily habits, and values. The most obvious evidence of how much of Los Angeles CityWalk's selection excludes is the absence of the ubiquitous banal stucco structure. Although Richard Orne, senior project architect believes, "We are not trying to create the icons, but the dumb boxes behind them," this will only be the case for the architects hired by each tenant to design their store's facade.\textsuperscript{70}

CityWalk then actually offers a glimpse into what some of the most influential designers in the Los Angeles area find attractive about their city. CityWalk expresses what one sector of

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} John Levy, (Interview by author).
\textsuperscript{70} Richard Orne, (Interview by author).
the defenders of the public realm believe should be the city's vision. Are not the buildings behind the selected images the same ones that these designers would like to see preserved, restored, or recreated?

In addition to necessitating a subjective selection of images, the process of creating a distilled environment also defines to what types of people the project will ultimately appeal to. Even within the same ethnic and socio-economic groups, the images and aspects of the city that East Valley residents might most enjoy will differ from those of a Hancock Park resident.

There is not full agreement that CityWalk is a distillation. Richard Orne argues, "CityWalk is not like the street of L.A. at Disney World in Florida; this is not Los Angeles' greatest hits." 71 James Nelson concurred, "This is not a distillation, it's not ersatz. The backlot is ersatz. Hollywood Studios' tour in Florida is ersatz." 72 And in a backhanded way, an architectural critic from a local magazine agreed, "Instead of distilling the essence of some of L.A.'s more engaging enclaves, as its sponsors claim, CityWalk mimics them. The result is an architectural conceit and more a marketing burlesque show." 73 Regardless of one's perspective, the tool of distillation has been utilized as an extension of control to determine CityWalk's sights, uses, and architectural styles.

71 Ibid.
72 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
"Theming" refers primarily to the premeditated arrangement and organization of programmed activities for a given place, each component of which is a variation of a common element. At CityWalk, this quality is directly expressed through four primary means: architectural elements, the tenant mix and characteristics, the manner in which the space is promoted, and the programming of the space with performers and activities.

A "themed" space may be programmed with a variety of events or activities, but each programmed component is a variation of and is attempting to buttress an overarching theme. Just as every film has a storyline and plot, most new large-scale developments make use of a central theme that ties the various components of the project together and gives it a cohesion that might otherwise be lacking.

Such themes can be generic ("You are at an historic marketplace") or specific and literal ("Welcome to King Arthur's Court"). The most explicit and obvious examples are amusement or 'theme' parks, where every element has been crafted to connote a particular set of images. Other increasingly common examples are hotels, such as Circus Circus and Excalibur hotels in Las Vegas, where not only the common areas are in keeping with the theme, but also the guest rooms. One of the most elaborate additions to the city-sized theme park known as Las Vegas will be the Treasure Island hotel, also done by Jon Jerde and other designers of CityWalk.

The impetus behind such elaborate and contrived designs is the developer's desire to transport the visitor to a more exciting, exotic, and enticing environment with the goal of attracting more visitors and getting them to spend more money once they arrive. Manipulating graphic images, simulating and distilling environments, and using media to do so, are all part of the staging and theming effort.

CityWalk promotes entertainment as its central theme, expressed in Jerde's most recent master plan for Universal City which seeks to reshape it and transform it into the "Entertainment City." A number of architects over the years have studied Universal's 420
acres and compiled their insights about its future into very different visions. Jerde saw the same piece of property and proposed a master plan for it to become an entertainment city.\textsuperscript{74} Although remnants of each plan have actually been developed, it is Jerde's vision that has prevailed to tie all of the Universal pieces together and set the theme for future development. According to MCA Development's president, "CityWalk was not designed as a unit to compete with shopping centers. It was designed as an entertainment center with the objective of enhancing the overall entertainment experience at the top of the hill. It was designed so that people will continue to identify Universal City as a place to come and have fun."\textsuperscript{75}

Jerde's decision to develop the property to celebrate the theme of entertainment as contrasted to the five previous master plans, underlines two important aspects of the development. First, it is significant that Jerde suggests an entertainment theme as opposed to something else; each designer picked a vision in keeping with the trends and tastes of his time. The great success of the Warner Brothers entertainment merchandise stores, as well as the $330 million spent last year on entertainment industry construction, attest to the increasing significance of entertainment in the recreational and retail markets.\textsuperscript{76} Second, it is significant that Jerde chose to utilize a theme; none of the other plans did so.

According to the MCA document "Vision for a City Center," Jerde is guided by a vision of an "opportunity to build the real physical embodiment of the entertainment capital of the world, with public spaces that delight, architecture that inspires and functionality that supports an incredible variety of human activities and experiences [to create] a prototype city of the Information Age."\textsuperscript{77} Jerde noted that missing was "a pedestrian spine to tie it all together and a sense of where it's going."\textsuperscript{78} The resultant project, CityWalk, itself one component of the promotion of that "city-wide" theme, will offer three variations: shopping as entertainment, theater as entertainment, and eating as entertainment.

\textsuperscript{74} James Nelson, (Interview by author).
\textsuperscript{75} Bonnie Steele, "MCA Reveals Plans for Universal City," \textit{Valley Magazine}, May, 1990, pp. 87-88.
\textsuperscript{76} Whiteson, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} James Nelson, (Interview by author).
Los Angeles public transit authorities report a 37% ridership increase since the Light Entertainment Rail concept was first introduced last year.

Figure 2.22
Shopping As Entertainment

The notion of the Entertainment City evolved from Jon Jerde's idea of an Urbanopolis: "a concept that the conventional regional shopping center can become the core of a lively and varied communal environment that includes a wide range of cultural and commercial activity."79 It is within this commercial context that CityWalk itself is being sold as a product.

Shopping has become the primary recreation for many Americans, and not just for the teenagers who use the malls daily to meet friends. A furniture store chain in the Boston area goes so far as to suggest that its outlets have spontaneously become opportune places for singles to mingle and meet on Saturday nights. Using a commercial in which two customers recite their story of how they were engaged to be married in the parking lot of one of the stores, the chain encourages people to browse among the sofas and beds with no pressure to purchase.

Shopping as entertainment has been elevated to a sophisticated level at CityWalk. The developers have made a concerted effort to provide a mix of tenants that would not be found at a regular mall, noting that "if you are shopping for a pair of shoes, you're in the wrong place here."80 Nearly all of the stores either sell items for entertainment, offer entertainment as part of shopping, or both. So a visiting consumer can buy a record at Sam Goody's or a crazy toy at Captain Coconuts, or can get dressed in costumes to take photographs at Out Takes, be drawn into a favorite comic book at Things From Another World, or visit a tiny working rain forest in the Nature Company. The now defunct downtown Museum of Neon Art will even have a small, 825-s.f. gallery/museum shop as well as twenty signs of the museum's collection along CityWalk that can be enjoyed with a rented headset-guided walking tour.

Theater As Entertainment

The primary source of activities focused on entertainment come from the confluence of movie activity at Universal, ranging from complete passivity to simulated participation. To

79 Whiteson, p. 10.
80 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
the far left of this spectrum is one of the two anchors for CityWalk, the Universal Cineplex Odeon. This massive 18-theater complex is the highest grossing movie theater in the world and attracts over two million people annually. Although a typical feature-length motion picture is a self-contained, indoor, primarily passive experience, the viewing of a movie usually spawns the desire for further activity, especially eating. CityWalk capitalizes on that relationship, offering an array of restaurants in close proximity to a variety of theaters.

For those looking for a slightly more intense and 'realistic' film experience, CityWalk plans to add an IMAX theater in the next stage of development. While IMAX theaters offer audiences a similar passive experience, and usually shorter than the ever-shrinking length of 'feature' films, the images reproduced are of a more intense nature. Further, because these films require a special technology, they are usually applied to unusual activities. The feeling after watching such a film is more than having viewed someone else's adventures, but a sense that you have experienced them yourself. When filming a downhill skier going seventy-five miles an hour, for example, the camera will be in the helmet of the skier so that the viewer can share the skier's perspective.

The next step up in the scale of simulated film experiences is the Showscan Dynamic Motion Simulator, a fifty-seat film-based thrill ride which combines "the excitement of an amusement park and the escape of going to the movies." Using ultra-realistic film images electronically linked to the audience's seats, participants are taken for an off-road auto race in the Baja or shot down roaring without ever leaving the theater.

On yet another level of film entertainment is the famed Universal Studios Tour, the other major anchor for CityWalk. Here, visitors are given a 'behind the scenes' look at filmmaking. One of the stops on the tour includes selecting one or two people from the audience, dressing them in costume, giving them a few lines to say, and then filming them with mock scenery. The audience watches reality become fantasy upon seeing the resulting film. In keeping with the feeling of illusion and hyper-reality that films provide as well as L.A.'s reputation suggests, all of the buildings that line the street will be fifty-percent larger than would a normal storefront on an urban commercial street. In contrast to Disney's Main Street which is at seven-eighths scale, smaller than normal, CityWalk is attempting to give the feeling of being larger than life. According to Orne, "The intent is to
make the mundane stuff larger than life. It's another way to take the edge off the seriousness of creating a literal environment.81

And on the most extreme level of participation in films that Universal offers its visitors, in case the studio tour didn't satisfy their needs for understanding the film-making process, CityWalk will facilitate the education of future television and film producers, directors, and writers. UCLA has leased a 25,000-s.f. facility on the upper two floors of one of the buildings that offers courses primarily in the film and TV industry in order "to meet the needs of the large concentration of people who work in film and television in the immediate area."82 A selection of the courses offered includes:

- Acting in Television Sitcoms
- Producing Movies on a Restricted Budget (for a fee of $325)
- Voice Acting for Animation
- School Earthquake Preparedness
- Basic Skills in Writing for the New Media
- Living as a Single
- Advocacy for Verbal and Presentation Art
- Personal Theater
- Introduction to Set Design and Model Building For Film and Television

In addition to the pervasive aura of film-making and viewing there will also be a deliberate theatrical element in the entertainment offerings. Described as a two-part "arts program," the Events Manager has arranged for two types of staged performances. "One of them is street performers a la Venice Beach. This is private property, so they'll be carefully controlled and auditioned, given a time and a place to be. There will be your regular juggler, stilt walker, street performer, and people playing guitar." These people will not be able to solicit money nor will they be paid a wage, but they may place a hat or open guitar case beside them.

The Events Manager is confident that CityWalk can attract top quality performers: "Because we are Universal, there is a group of artists that would normally take a fee that might be willing to come here because the foot traffic up here would make it more desirable for

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81 Richard Orne, (Interview by author).
them. To find these people, I usually go down to Venice, or to Third Street Promenade. Performers will include Mr. Animation, a dancer who gesticulates all of his muscles, and a high school cello quartet that currently performs on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. "What will happen is that I will put them in a certain location based on where I think they will be well received. The idea is to bring people to the street, so I will put them in key locations so that passersby will stop." These types of performers will only be present Thursday through Sundays during the summer, and only on the weekends during the rest of the year.

The second tier of the arts program will consist of paid stage performers. These performers will use a portable stage in a grassy area across from the Cineplex. Although a full plan has not been completed, there may be concert series that would offer lunchtime concerts for people who work in the area. Thursday evenings in May, for example, there will be a Big Band group that will offer dance lessons. The idea behind this programming is to "build user loyalty because the target audience for CityWalk is the local people." The MCA staff believes that this long-run goal will only be achieved if area residents will say, "What do you want to do tonight? Let's go to CityWalk and see what's up." Ultimately, the hope is that neighbors will think "It's some place to go and always be entertained." Reiterating that all of the programmed events will not have restricted entry, an MCA staff person boasted, "This will all be free to the public."

**Eating as Entertainment**

The third major variation on the entertainment theme, following closely the doctrine of William H. Whyte, is an aggregation of food. A total of 2,000 seats will be available for dining competing not only for the visitors to all of Universal's attractions, but also for the 10,000 employees of the studios who work in the backlot and the sound stages. In addition, "despite the foodservice industry's lackluster sales trends and recessionary jitters, MCA officials estimate that $30 million to $40 million in untapped restaurant-sales potential resides within a fifteen to twenty minute drive of Universal City." Considering the

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83 Joy Novie, (Interview by author).
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Martin, p. 49.
existing three restaurants on the site reaped $17.5 million last year, MCA recognized the potential for large profits.

Some of the offerings will include the obligatory frozen yogurt store, Yo-Gert; a gourmet pizza restaurant by L.A.'s most prolific pizza maker, Wolfing Puck; and the L.A. Juice store. Other, more entertainment-themed offerings include the KWGB burger restaurant which will have a live disc jockey spinning records amidst 1950s radio station decor; Copper Kettle Confections and Fancy Goods, a 1900s-style candy store; Jody Maroni's Sausage Kingdom, a gourmet sausage stand that will offer food to go; and Upstart Crow, a bookstore/coffeehouse that will offer "the opportunity to experience the flavor and appeal of a vibrant Elizabethan coffeehouse, just as the great literary minds did in 17th century England."\(^8^9\)

The big restaurant anchors are Camacho's Cantina, Gladstone's, and Tony Roma's which will relocate from another part of Universal City to the Central Court. Aside from the simulated qualities already mentioned, all three will offer entertainment in addition to the food itself. Camacho's will not only offer an 'authentic' Mexican theme as suggested by its decor, costumes, and cuisine, but, like Gladstone's, will also include the popular concept of an exhibition kitchen. Watching the food be prepared may be as entertaining as the pleasure of consuming it.

According to Ray Bradbury, "When you see a good film, you are hungry for books. If you read a good book, you're hungry for a movie, and then you are hungry for food. So you've got this symbiotic triangulation."\(^9^0\) It is just this three-sided relationship that CityWalk will be promoting; each of the three components offering entertainment in their own right, and together creating an entertainment destination. According to the project's leasing director, "This project, both from its design standpoint and from its merchandising standpoint will provide people with a very entertaining trip."\(^9^1\) As if there was a need for reiteration, promotional information for the project boasts, "Universal CityWalk is destined to become 'L.A.'s premier destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment."\(^9^2\)

\(^8^9\) MCA Development, Co. Press Kit, Universal CityWalk, 1991, p. 16.
\(^9^0\) Ray Bradbury (Interview by author).
\(^9^1\) Thomas Gilmore, General Manager, MCA Development, Co. (Interview by author), January 10, 1993.
While the developers hold "theming" responsible for the future attractiveness of both Universal City and CityWalk, there is no consensus on the benevolence of a themed environment. The author of an article in Buzz Magazine acknowledges the themed quality of CityWalk with a noticeably contrary perception, "Underneath the hype, CityWalk appears to be no more than an egregiously decorated open-air, themed shopping center, right down to its two customer-generating anchors..." And Richard Weinstein, Dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA, who served as an early consultant to the project, suggests, "When you don't have history you have to find reasons for doing things. One way of doing so is through theming and simulating. I have my own misgivings about that strategy." 94

But it is perhaps the token representation of MCA's Japanese parent company that best elucidates the most valued qualities of CityWalk. Panasonic, the primary subsidiary of Matsushita, will have a pavilion at the far west end of CityWalk intended to serve as a public relations booth themed as a state fair because Steven Spielberg believed that was an image that "will make American people like Panasonic." The pavilion has been adorned with a carousel, video fun house, digitronic theater, electronic petting zoo, and other electronic-based attractions. The designer of the pavilion, Craig Hodgetts, said about his work on this component of CityWalk, "It's not about architecture, it's about entertainment." 96

93 Kaplan, p. 50.  
95 Craig Hodgetts, (Interview by author).  
96 Ibid.
DISCRIMINATION

The success of a retail establishment depends on more than just people. It depends on the right people.97

The term "discriminate," which literally means to distinguish by discerning or exposing differences, implies an inherent and often covert selection process that results in limited access. The ability to control entry facilitates a space's management, heightens its prestige, and increases its security level.

Every built-environment has some criteria for entry regardless of where it might be plotted on a scale of publicness, but this characteristic is important because we are seeing environments becoming more highly restricted, more often, and in new ways. If we persist to accept this at more than a minimal level we risk the danger of not recognizing the alteration of our tolerance for discrimination. What we currently consider a 'reasonable' level of restricted access may continue to expand and thus promote the already pervasive segregation in American cities.

For most people, the notion of a physical environment characterized by discrimination evokes images of racially or ethnically restricted country clubs or gated communities. Such places overtly limit who can enter their premises, either by physically cordoning it with a fence or by requiring 'membership', meaning the capability to meet certain financial, and often racial and ethnic, criteria. But these are representative of the most narrow and overt interpretations of the contemporary built-environment's ability to discriminate. CityWalk has neither a physical gate around its premises nor a formal membership requirement, but it discriminates in three ways: it has been developed with a targeted population in mind, it is physically isolated, and it is maintained as a highly safe recreational environment.

TARGETED MARKET

Like any commercial venture, the creation of CityWalk has been based on the decisions of a limited group of people, with pre-defined goals, following a defined plan or strategy.

Together, the selectivity of these countless, often minuscule individual choices ultimately results in a product that appeals to some people and not to others. There is some room for happenstance, but a real estate venture, particularly one of this size, makes a conscientious effort to target, advertise to, and eventually draw a defined market segment. This strategy is not a disguised manifestation of racial or ethnic prejudice, but an attempt to ensure an adequate market for a particular product. As explained by one of the project designers,

The idea is to synthesize something that is not simply bricks and mortar, but which represents an entire, thematically developed dramatic entity that has all of the qualities that have been synergistically mixed together by a master designer. In other words, the design is far less the bricks and mortar and far more the mix of uses at a shop by shop level; the identification of a market that is less generic than the old style development which is far less focused upon a particular market.98

The master designers of CityWalk have had an incessant dilemma to grapple with: how to design a place that will evoke the quintessential image of Los Angeles and accompanying attractions to get the five million tourists who already come to Universal City to spend more time and money while also serving the diverse needs of local residents. According to Richard Orne, senior project architect,

The tourists have a certain expectation of what Los Angeles is; they come with a preconceived notion of what they want to see. In a way, we are trying to meet that expectation. We have to be very careful though; this is a real big experiment. On the one hand you could go so far and create something that's completely ersatz and create another sort of Disneyland Main Street. It may appeal to the tourists, but completely turn off the locals because it becomes something which is specifically aimed at that target market. We're trying to find that place on the dial that meets the needs and interests of both groups. If it is exclusive to the tourists, the locals will be scared off. If it is exclusively for the locals, it won't be something that is attractive for the tourists. So we're trying find something that will fit both of those groups.99

Starting with the foundation of a tourist attraction and working their way toward an environment that will appeal to Los Angeles residents, MCA turned to the local residents for their input. Responding to a local institutional ecology of extremely active community groups, effort has gone into building a more efficient transportation infrastructure to mitigate existing and future traffic impacts. In terms of CityWalk, communication with the community commenced when MCA, according to an article in the Valley Magazine, "mailed extensive surveys to neighboring community members asking them what they'd like to see built on top of the hill."100

98 Craig Hodgetts, (Interview by author).
99 Richard Orne, (Interview by author).
100 Steele, p. 88.
The success of a retail establishment depends on more than just people. It depends on the right people.

Imagine a market that's bigger than the Westside of Los Angeles and includes Beverly Hills and Brentwood.

Imagine a market that is saturated with highly-educated professionals with extremely high levels of disposable income from both urban and suburban households.

Imagine a 2.5 billion dollar market for food, entertainment and retail that is open 7 days a week from 10:00 am to 12 midnight, all year long.

Imagine locating near to an existing anchor that annually attracts 9 million visitors looking for the best in entertainment, shopping, dining and a good time— all before you even open your doors.

This is no dream; this is the market at Universal CityWalk. And as a retailer, the existing traffic is the best demographic of all.

It would be hard to find a better crowd of prospects than you'll have at Universal CityWalk.

The typical patron has an average household income of $48,500 per year— 60% above the national average. And 73% of those visitors are in the 25-49 age bracket.

Universal City's 5 mile radius contains 250,000 households with an average yearly income in excess of $43,000.

As a retailer, Universal CityWalk is your chance to be part of an environment that's on the cutting edge of the American lifestyle. Universal City—the Entertainment Capital of the World.

Figure 2.23
Demographic information as part of the project's marketing campaign to prospective tenants.
The respondents to the survey, 60% of whom were over fifty and 38% over sixty years old, answered with requests for such services as bookstores, outdoor cafes, a dinner theater, a library, an art museum, Italian and seafood restaurants, a high-end department store, a jazz club and an educational facility. According to an MCA staff person, "The whole leasing process was done based on the survey." But while some of the requested services will appear at CityWalk, like the seafood restaurant, bookstore, a dinner theater, an outdoor cafe, and the UCLA Extension campus, many others will not. There will be a couple of high-end boutiques instead a department store, a gourmet pizza restaurant instead of Italian, a gallery store instead of an art museum, no jazz club, and no library.

The second component of MCA's community involvement was embodied in the creation of a Citizen's Advisory Group which brought homeowner association members, representatives from local politicians' offices, and MCA Development staff together. As described by James Nelson, "The group was assembled to maintain a positive rapport with MCA's neighbors and to serve as a sounding board for community thoughts and concerns. MCA has been more of a homeowner than a developer in Universal City. This is where our corporate offices are. If we do something that will hurt the area, it is essentially hurting us."

Although the inherent exclusiveness of a project such as CityWalk may be diminished by an inclusive decision-making process, it appears that the survey that CityWalk sent to the four nearby homeowners associations can be interpreted in a slightly different manner. Among a number of general questions about the area, local politicians, and shopping habits, respondents were asked to answer a few questions based on the following scenario: "Let's assume for a moment there is a ten-year development plan for a large parcel of land in your general area. This development would include offices, residential, commercial, retail, recreation and entertainment facilities. None of these buildings would be within 500 feet of existing residences and traffic congestion would not increase because of better roads and signals. Based on what you just read, would you favor or oppose such a development plan?"

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101 Some further information about the respondents: 37% of respondents have graduate degrees, 71% graduated from college. 47% are democrats and 81% have no one under 18 in their home.
102 Joy Novie, (Interview by author).
103 Approximately 2/3 of the property is located in unincorporated county land and 1/3 is within L.A. municipal boundaries.
104 Steele, p. 88.
105 Joy Novie, (Interview by author).
This scenario inquires hypothetically about what the residents would like to see if something were built in their area, as opposed to asking what they would like to see in a new development that was already being planned. According to an MCA staff person, "These people were surveyed because they are organized, easy to get to, and are representative of the market we are attracting."

The survey touts itself as an essential component of community participation, yet it is clearly more of a marketing research effort than a forum for public input into the development process. Furthermore, Nelson explained that he cannot find fault with those who have been critical of CityWalk because "none of them have seen it. The only person that has seen it is me, inside my head. And it took a long time to get it out of there." There is a fine line between what constitutes serious community involvement and market research, but MCA's process reflects their very selective view of whose input will prove useful and thus who it is that they hope to attract.

Despite the efforts to provide what the local residents have requested, some of those involved in the project are not confident that it will serve more than tourists. "My feeling is that the principal market for CityWalk is still going to be tourists. It is not going to be a point of destination for people throughout the [Los Angeles] Basin, on a regular basis," offered one project architect. Another suggested, "It really could go the other way, where there is nobody there except people in Polyester suits and it is dead as a doornail. If Universal is not extremely liberal in terms of the kind of people that they allow to be there, I mean if they are as sanitary as Disney and exercise their right of domain over who knows, it will be sequestered in a certain way."  

Physical Remoteness

The view that CityWalk may be or appear to be a segregated or isolated locale comes not only from how it is marketed, but also from its actual physical remoteness. Referring to Universal City, most people who live in the area say "at the top of the hill," since the entire Universal City is set up on a hill overlooking the San Fernando Valley on three sides and

106 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
107 Craig Hodgetts, (Interview by author).
the Hollywood Freeway as it snakes though the Cahuenga Pass. CityWalk's general manager, for example, said, "We are primarily a tourist destination and entertainment conglomerate, up on top of a hill, in a city that is not given to foot traffic." The result is a development that lacks any connection to the surrounding street grid. "The name notwithstanding, CityWalk does not promise to be urban, let alone urbane, located as it is in a remote, controlled setting miles from any real history," remarks one journalist. Given its topographical remoteness, little effort has been made to compensate. Two things could conceivably be done to partially remedy this isolation: bring people to the site or bring the site closer to the people.

An attempt to facilitate bringing people to the site began when a new off ramp was built to connect the freeway directly with Universal's hill, and also to allow the municipal bus service to begin running a line up the hill. No MCA staffperson knew when the bus ran or how often. One MCA staff person explained her unfamiliarity with the bus service, "I am a person who never takes the bus in L.A. I have never been on a single, solitary bus." From MCA's perspective, because Universal City is a private recreation and retail environment, it would not be financially logical for them to spend money on aiding those who cannot drive there because these are the same people who cannot afford to spend money there. The project's press release reiterates this sentiment: "Located in the heart of Universal City, CityWalk is accessible from the Universal City off ramps of the Hollywood Freeway. Local residents and visitors may take the Lankershim, Cahuenga and Barham Boulevards' entrances to Universal City."

A second option would be to develop the site to link with the surrounding street grid. Although this may occur in three or four decades, for the moment it is clearly to the advantage of MCA to stay as far up on the hill as possible to keep their development growth far away from potentially complaining neighbors. Explained CityWalk's general manager: "Developing on the hill there is an advantage of speed to get things done because there is very little in the way of politics to deal with. It's great to be able to go through the process so easily, compared to building on the Boston waterfront, for example. As a consumer and as a community resident, I wouldn't want to see everybody have carte blanche like that. There is too much opportunity for crap." Furthermore, although none

108 Thomas Gilmore, (Interview by author).
109 Kaplan, p. 50.
110 MCA Development, Co. Press Kit, p. 10.
111 Thomas Gilmore, (Interview by author).
of the nine restaurants in the project have obtained their alcohol permits yet, MCA believes that it will not be a problem because the Alcohol and Beverage Commission "looks at location" when making their determination.\textsuperscript{112}

CityWalk's remoteness also ensures there will be no chance to walk to it or have the activity of the surrounding neighborhoods overlap. This works to CityWalk's advantage both politically and economically because once visitors arrive, it is unlikely they would leave to patronize other businesses in the area. Currently, for those who do arrive by automobile and pay $5 for a parking spot, half of that fee is refunded with a receipt from the cineplex. Although there is no formal entrance fee, a de facto operates because no free parking is available.

\textbf{Security}

The last major component of CityWalk's character that contributes to its restrictiveness is its concerted efforts to create an environment substantially more safe than a publicly managed street. This was addressed in the marketing survey by revealing that, in response to the question about how Universal City compares in terms of personal safety to "other places in Los Angeles," 18\% of the respondents marked excellent, 48\% good, and 26\% responded with "average." With over 65\% of the respondents believing Universal is safer than general locales in Los Angeles, and over 90\% finding it at least as safe, CityWalk will be able to use this concern for safety as an essential part of its attractiveness. MCA hopes to promote the feeling behind Ray Bradbury’s concept of "safely lost," which allows people to participate in a complex and dynamic urban experience without feeling fearful of the unknown or threatened by the stranger. In his essay, "The Aesthetics of Lostness," Bradbury writes, "Cities and malls are no fun if your compass is functioning with complete accuracy. The hint of danger without danger. The chance to ascend into expectancy, the chance to descend into satisfaction and delight."

The simulated urban complexity and dynamism will be supplemented by a sense of safety supplied by a Los Angeles County Sheriff’s substation located on the premises. Before the substation was established the Sheriff's Department charged MCA each time there was an incident needing law enforcement, charging from the time the officers left the nearest

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
station in North Hollywood. Because their own security cannot make arrests, the number of incidents they had each year actually made it less expensive for MCA to just have two or three officers on-site in a permanent facility.

James Nelson explained that the fact that CityWalk is a piece of "private public space," like a shopping center, means that they are able to provide certain amenities that require supervision and security which would be financially unfeasible on "civic property." It is the concentration of revenue producers in one place that makes a substantial expense like a substation feasible. Proof is supplied by the growing number of traditional retail malls that have their own law enforcement facilities and as do many gated communities and wealthy neighborhoods. "It is a privatization of the funding for municipal services. It amounts to a tax: if you want police protection...all you have to do is pay for it."113

In light of the ever-increasing rates of crime throughout the nation, and the almost numbing fear that has hit many Los Angelenos after the 1992 riots, it is logical that for a product such as CityWalk, a place that encourages people to just 'hang out', a high level of security would be required. This is true both in terms of having the means to respond to a situation where large groups of people congregate as well as the ability to offer security as an amenity (or perhaps now a necessity) so as to attract people there in the first place.

The supplying of safety through security forces and surveillance also contributes to the discrimination of the project. The relevance is more that certain types of people are attracted to these environments because they have this exclusionary quality than the fact that other, less mainstream individuals are kept out. Responding defensively, James Nelson added "This is hardly a gated community. This is not a Disneyland where people with long hair are refused admittance. If you go up to the movie theaters, it's a public movie theater. There are people there who don't look like you, but they're welcome."114

The issue of security is not just about the potential for actual physical harm, but about the potential of interaction with people who are considered 'nuisances.' Focus groups arranged by the same company that did the community survey showed that many people avoided going to Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica because panhandlers made them feel unsafe and they were uncomfortable walking down the pedestrian alleys from the

113 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
114 Ibid.
parking structures to the street. When one person in the focus group suggested that she liked Hollywood Boulevard, "others were quick to show concern for how 'different' people were there." In contrast, both Melrose Avenue, an eclectic commercial street surrounded by a middle class residential neighborhood, and Universal City were considered "safe zones." 115

Nelson expressed his view on security and its resultant spillover effects of exclusion, "If I have a chance to run a private public place I would do two things. One, try and control those kinds of behavior that are generally unacceptable to the majority of the population; mugging, obscenities, drunkenness, etc. If I can do anything to minimize that, I will. Two, make sure there are means of making contributions to charities integrated into the project." 116 CityWalk will have a wishing well which will collect donations for children's charities. A calendar of events to benefit the charities MCA sponsors will also be planned.

According to a marketing research study conducted for CityWalk, people think primarily of ease of parking, reasonable cost of parking, and physical security when choosing a place to spend an evening out. 117 Century City Marketplace, an open-air mall in the heart of an entertainment office district that abuts Beverly Hills, was mentioned as the preferred model for a night out. What people expressed was that they wanted the "safety of Disneyland with the offbeat character of Venice Beach." 118 CityWalk will offer the flavor of both.

CityWalk, having extracted elements from both the simplistic suburban mall and the dogma of Disney, represents the evolution of the built-environment along a continuum of the forms of the public realm. The suburban mall was sprinkled throughout the country in a form determined by a rigidly defined equation that prescribed every variable from landscaping and the floor plan to the tenant mix and signage fonts. No matter in what location, the same formula was used to produce predictable, highly profitable, and the most controlled environments ever to become a component of mass culture.

116 James Nelson, (Interview by author).
118 Ibid.
Disneyland and the theme parks it spawned also offered a highly controlled contribution to mass culture. In contrast to malls, theme parks were overt about offering a packaged, themed, distilled product; the basic concept was rooted in fantasy and simulation for the sake of recreation. Walt Disney's unique concoction not only provided a powerful development prototype, but also led to the popularity among consumers and developers for fantasy and illusion-based environments. The emergence of sophisticated, highly private developments like CityWalk, combined with the steady deterioration of the traditional public sphere have dramatically reshaped the nature of the public landscape.
Figure 2.24 Advice for coping with urban banality.

Figure 2.25 CityWalk: the new escape for Angelenos.
CHAPTER THREE

SUBVERSION OF
THE CIVIC
On April 28, 1858, Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux were awarded the commission to design a central park for the most populated and dense American metropolis. The founding father of American landscape architecture, Olmsted envisioned a respite from the harshness of New York's nineteenth-century urban life where people could interact with the healthful natural environment. Most central to his vision was to create a landscape where the disparate social classes could rub shoulders; a great social mixer to serve as an instrument for cultural enlightenment.119

When Central Park was finished, the astounding metamorphosis of two square miles of treeless swamp into a lush landscape with bridal paths, meandering promenades and meadows, proved Olmsted's dream had come to fruition. In 1886, reflecting on the success of Central Park, Olmsted wrote: "The poor and rich come together in it in larger numbers than anywhere else, and enjoy what they find in it in more complete sympathy than they enjoy anything else together."120 Central Park was the quintessence of what became to be considered the traditional American public realm, a civic sphere designed to bring people of diverse backgrounds together and to engender them with Victorian morals.

The park remains a vital, functioning and popular component of Manhattan's life still today, but much of its original intent as a premier public space, a safe social melting pot, is fading. The recent plans for a $51 million renovation demonstrates its neglected maintenance over recent years and at the same time its premier symbolic value as a component of public life. The forces diminishing its public contribution are the same forces that are subverting the traditional public realm and fueling the encroachment of the private sphere upon public life, as represented through developments like CityWalk. Fear is driving us into private, semi-homogenous enclaves; market segmentation is reinforcing this shift by offering us information and products tailored to our individual needs; technology is leading us to seek new, non-traditional public realm activities; and together these forces are leading to and reflecting a desire for a greater sense of community.

119 Kostof, p. 276.
FEAR

A near middle-age single-mother, ex-60's activist, moved her family to Oakland from suburban San Jose after divorcing her husband. Her old neighborhood had been a community where people left their doors unlocked and a car break-in was newsworthy. Yet she decided that the suburban, isolated world her peers had clung to would not provide a sufficiently ‘realistic’ environment for her children to grow up in. She wanted her kids to live in a mixed neighborhood, where they would go to public schools and interact with people of diverse backgrounds.121

In their new home, the family became acquainted with the ethnically and otherwise diverse neighbors. The children attended the local public school where they made friends with an equally diverse group. But, one morning she walked her two adolescent sons to the subway station in Oakland where the three of them witnessed a young boy talking to a police officer having been beaten up. The mother muttered to herself, yet audibly to her children, "How could such a thing happen even at 8:00 in the morning?" In disgust, one of her sons turned to her and said, "Teenagers hang around the parking lot and wait for white kids to beat up. We're used to it. Why do you make such a big deal out of every little thing?"122

This was not the first time she had heard similar sentiments from her kids, but this time she was left with a new and more profound realization; "How can I call myself a good mother when I can't even keep my kids safe? How can they turn out to be sweet, sensitive men when the life I've given them requires such callousness, such denial, such smooth, detached responses to daily fear and horror?"123

Later that same evening, she wondered what her wealthier and more fortunate friends who had already fled to exclusive neighborhoods would be thinking of her after reading this.

122 Ibid, p. 57.
headline. She thought to herself, "I've got to get away from Oakland, get safe." 124 Feeling as her parents once did, and regretfully so, she yearned for the 'good old days'. She recalled how only just a few years earlier she never kept her dog on a leash, locked her car, or thought twice about walking alone at night. She realized, despite all of her deep-felt principles regarding public schools, mixed ethnic communities, and political action, that she was afraid enough to abandon them.

**SHIFT FROM COMMUNITY TO SAFETY**

Decisions about planning, development, urban design, and even aesthetic issues are all commonly influenced, if not determined, by safety-related concerns. On an individual level, it is possible to look at the changes we see in people's decision-making; the woman in this story provides a stark example. If someone is as committed as this woman was to being part of a diverse community, but is driven from her ideals out of fear, it is likely that most Americans who can afford it would certainly choose as she ultimately did--to retreat. Fear has become such a powerful force in contemporary urban culture that those with resources are retreating to safe havens that offer a more isolated, self-referential, individualistic, and thus more private lifestyle. The prevalence of gated communities is only one of the most blatant and profound examples of this withdrawal.

It is commonplace to hear people complain that they have become afraid to walk in areas of the city where they used to feel comfortable. In a survey done as part of the research for *The Female Fear*, 25.3% of the female respondents stated that they never walk in their neighborhood alone after dark and 52% stated that they cross the street when they see someone who seems strange or dangerous.125

Given the prevalence of crime and violence in Los Angeles and throughout the nation, these fears are quite rational. Los Angeles County saw its deadliest year in 1992 with 2,589 homicides, an 8% increase from the previous year, representing "enough slain people to fill the downtown Ahmanson Theater to more than capacity."126 The County's homicide rate has been on the rise since 1970, dropping for a few years until 1991. In 1970, 10.2

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124 Maran, p. 58.
125 Guterson, p. 65.
homicides were committed for every 100,000 city residents, but this figure leaped in 1991 to 28 homicides for every 100,000 residents. As explained in an article in the Los Angeles Times, "Behind Los Angeles' violence is a complex web of social and economic factors, exacerbated by the proliferation of firearms, the spread of the drug trade, immigration patterns, racial friction, and a youthful population that has grown more alienated and angry."127

Nationally, the crime rate has also dramatically shifted; over the past thirty years a 400% increase has been recorded.128 The violent crime rate reached an all-time high in 1991, marking an increase of 24% since 1987. And a new national murder record was set in 1992 with an astounding 24,020 violent deaths. Together, these statistics explain how homicide has become the nation's tenth leading cause of death.129

The American free-market system, deeply rooted in neo-classical micro-economic theory, prides itself on the self-adjusting responsiveness of the private business sector to the whims, desires and needs of the nation's population. So the theory goes, if there is demand, supply is sure to follow, and those with the combination of adequate utility (demand) and resources (money) will have their needs satiated. The real estate development community has responded to our fears by producing increasingly restrictive and vigilant new developments. The implication for those concerned with the built-environment is evident: a migration to all things insulated and the near death of traditional urban public spaces. Public life is taking on a new meaning, one that is explicitly embodied in the hermetically-sealed shopping malls and exclusive gated communities that continually sprout up on the American landscape.

**Shifting Tolerance**

Many Los Angeles residents are willing to brave an hour or more in thick traffic twice a day so that they may live in one type of environment and work in another, but this was not always the case in Southern California, and certainly has never been the case in many parts of the country. We tend to get used to inconveniences even though they damage us, the

128 Hubler, p. 1.
129 Ibid.
people we care about, and even the elements that are crucial to our physical and emotional sustenance. Our willingness to tolerate with traffic is an example of how our standards can change and how they are often relative to both place and time.

A similar, yet less obvious point from the story of the mother in Oakland is how her standards had changed without her noticing and against her will. She had lived for years in a safe suburban neighborhood and so such an opportunity was not foreign to her, yet she was not prepared to become comfortable with the differences between her two neighborhoods, to subconsciously incorporate them into her daily life. Pondering her dilemma, she asked herself, "Is it that life in the city -- any city, but most certainly the one that I live in -- has simply gotten exponentially worse (along with my fears) since I moved here eight years ago?"130

The increase in criminal activity changed her subtly evolving notions of what level of safety and fear is 'reasonable'. Coinciding with the decrease in funding for countless social programs and the increase in poverty and the violent crime rate, her standards had been changing until she finally reached a point where it disturbed her -- a point that took eight years to reach. This phenomenon is disconcerting because we adapt ourselves so readily that sometimes that we do not realize we are compromising our values and ideals in the process.

As an urban society, we have begun to accept fear as a reality that cannot be altered, but that may be avoided. We seem not to question why we have the safety problems we have, and rather than working towards developing strategies for our cities and communities that enable them to prevent criminal and violent activities, we merely attempt to mitigate them. Faced with the choice of taking a daily vitamin C or doing nothing and waiting to treat a nasty flu once it's hit, we nearly always do nothing. It is no surprise that the American political system, centered in practice around the desire for reelection of its representatives, promotes a preference for short-term, quick result policy-making.

The federal government's "War on Drugs" that heavily directs funding towards police crackdowns rather than drug rehabilitation or prevention programs is just one manifestation of this tendency. After 28 years on the force, Isaac Fulwood, the District of Columbia's chief of police, resigned and turned to working as director of the District's new Youth

130 Maran, p. 59.
Initiatives Office, explaining that he wants "to prevent crime rather than merely respond to it."\footnote{Vicki Kemper, "A Tough Cop On the Trail of Hope," \textit{Utne Reader}, (Excerpted from Common Cause Magazine) March/April 1993, p. 70.}

Fulwood asserted that the time has come "for politicians and society alike to bite the bullet, to trade easy responses for real solutions, to get angry enough and compassionate enough and smart enough to address the causes of violent crime: poverty, guns, drugs, and a value system that is totally out of kilter."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 70.} His ideas are fresh, but they are not original. Following the urban insurrections of the 1960's in Los Angeles, Detroit and Miami, a sense of urgency engendered a concerted effort to confront social problems. Yet by the 1980's, the bulk of the 1960's War on Poverty programs had dwindled as the sense of urgency faded.

The Reagan and Bush approach over the 1980's emphasized more police, more arrests, stiffer sentences, more executions and more prisons. But responding to assertions during the Reagan era that social programs failed to make a dent in crime rates, many criminologists argue that a crime prevention approach has never really been given a fair chance. The riots across the country ignited by the 1992 flames in Los Angeles appeared to reawaken the nation to the desperate straits that cities and their residents are in, but pressure for new job training programs, enterprise zones and other measures have been short-lived.

The nation's legislative branch is as much to blame as the executive, for it often puts forth anti-crime bills that stress prisons and the death penalty as opposed to crime prevention programs that "take time to work, cost money, and usually are seen as social programs." Fulwood notes that "voters put politicians in the position of championing policies that don't work."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 71.} James Fyfe, a professor of criminal justice at Temple University adds, "To do something about crime over the long haul, we have to do something about the conditions of the inner city."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 71.} "This short-sighted policy of incarceration. . .and tough law enforcement against street [drug] addicts. . .makes the world safe for politicians, but it doesn't address the problems of community violence," asserts the president of the National Council on Crime and delinquency in San Francisco.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 73.}
American society has reached a point in its history where one of the few things people now have in common is fear. We are bound together in the apprehension about random violence. As Mike Davis has asserted in his 1990 book *City of Quartz*, "In cities like Los Angeles, on the bad edge of post-modernity, one observes an unprecedented tendency to merge urban design, architecture, and the police apparatus into a single, comprehensive security effort." 136 The apprehension about violence manifested itself in the way we allocate and utilize space in our cities.

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MARKET SEGMENTATION

Manuel Castells has argued that one of the three basic objectives upon which urban social movements have historically been organized is the "search for cultural identity, the defense of communication between people, autonomously defined social meaning, and face-to-face interaction, against the monopoly of messages by the media, the predominance of one-way information flows, and the standardization of culture on the basis of increasingly heteronomous sources for the neighborhood residents." While the needs of finding a cultural identity and interacting face-to-face seem to have remained constant, they are being expressed in new forms now that communications technology has begun to free interaction via electronics from both time and place.

We are currently witnessing the breakup of what was once a mass-media culture as a result of the application of information technology. Toffler, in The Third Wave, uses the term "de-massified media" to refer to the new, yet evolving body that feeds the American culture its daily dose of images in the form of advertising and information. From a business perspective, we are seeing a segmentation of the marketplace in which marketing utilizes the media to both target particular groups as well as tailor products to ever more narrow associations of individuals. Because mass media forms are an integral element of our association with other people and information of all types, the de-massification of our culture has profound effects on the quality and form of public life.

The movement towards a more segmented marketplace both fuels and is fueled by the increasing multiplicity of cultural expression seen on the American cultural landscape. We are no longer a nation of mere "Americans," but Americans with distinct ethnic and cultural identities that preceded and now interrelate with our American identity; the heightened identifiability of communities like the Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and Mexican-Americans are testament to this. Lacking a strong sense of community in their role as urban dwellers, or perhaps rallying together in response to common exogenous forces, there has been a widespread return to ethnic roots that has become integral to popular culture.

MARKET BY RACE

For the greater African-American community, for example, just the increased use of this hyphenated name in recent years is itself indicative of a shift away from an identity as merely a color or race and towards an ethnicity-based culture. Races do not have fashions or music styles, but cultures do. Similarly, signaling a desire for a geographically-based label and identity rather than one relative to the dominant Eurocentric culture, we now identify various groups as part of the Asian-American community (and often more specific as Japanese- or Korean-American) rather than as Orientals (meaning 'Eastern').

Awareness of the vitality and distinctness of the Native American culture has also begun to permeate popular culture.

The market feeds on this heightened cultural awareness while simultaneously encouraging it in a self-propagating cycle. Seeing the potential for a new market niche, the private-sector attempts to nourish it in a similar manner that the U.S. Government provides assistance to an eastern-bloc territory struggling for liberation from the clutches of communism so that there will be one more free-market, import-reliant nation to assist in the reduction of the U.S. trade deficit. Domestically, a keen business person may observe growth in African-American identity and association and thus sell imported African clothing. Then, further and more visibly recognizing the interest in Black history, someone else might produce a big-budget film on the life of an important black figure and complement it with related merchandise. Such productions, like a feature film on a figure like Malcolm X, also educates and thus furthers the identifiability of the African-American community.

We are beginning to see a proliferation of television shows and networks, commercials, newspapers, and magazines, directed solely at African-Americans. Using television as a prime example, it is evident that viewing patterns are becoming more culturally distinct. A study of the first half of the 1992-1993 television season revealed that none of the top ten rated shows for the black audience was on the list of the overall top ten shows. Of the top twenty shows among blacks, only four appeared on the top twenty overall.138 In contrast, eight years ago fifteen of the top shows among blacks were also top overall. The study

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revealed that as more advertisers tailor their campaigns to specific groups, the racial composition of television audiences is increasingly regarded as crucial in media buying. Many companies, including fast-food chains, car manufacturers and makers of athletic shoes, now use separate ads aimed at black viewers and white viewers. The study attributed the widened disparity to the increase in programs that feature black characters and are aimed particularly at black viewers.\textsuperscript{139}

According to the vice president of the advertisement agency that performed the study, "It's a reflection of all the choices that blacks have...For advertisers who are particularly interested in reaching the African-American market, ...it is extremely valuable to pinpoint ratings, audience composition, and cost efficiency among this group."\textsuperscript{140} The recognition of this disparity is so recent that A.C. Nielsen Company, in response to a growing demand for data about the racial composition of audiences, has only recently begun to report such information to its clients monthly as opposed to the previously occasional special report.\textsuperscript{141}

As part of his argument of the media's de-massification, Alvin Toffler cites that the large daily newspapers have increasingly lost readership despite increasing urban populations. From 1972 to 1977, for example, the percentage of Americans who read the daily paper decreased from 69% to 62%. During the same period, the three major dailies in New York City lost over half a million readers. But this decline cannot be solely attributed to the copiousness of television, for the number of mini-circulation newspapers that serve specific neighborhoods and communities grew widely. Weeklies, biweeklies and so-called 'shoppers' offered very localized news and advertising.\textsuperscript{142} But, as Toffler noted, "To compete with the smaller, more localized media the larger papers are increasing local coverage and adding a variety of special-interest sections. The surviving dailies of the 1980's and 1990's will be drastically changed by the segmentation of the reading public."\textsuperscript{143} Just as Toffler predicted in 1980, large papers like the \textit{New York Times} can now be received throughout the country in local formats and with local advertising.

A similar trend has occurred in magazines, as large mass formats have been challenged by smaller formats tailored to age groups, ethnicity, sport, hobby, or geographical location.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}
A similar trend has occurred in magazines, as large mass formats have been challenged by smaller formats tailored to age groups, ethnicity, sport, hobby, or geographical location. In radio, the variety of stations and programs has flourished in order to appeal to "specialized audience segments instead of to the hitherto undifferentiated mass audience." Added to these media have of course been the proliferation of cable television that creates the possibility for neighborhood program production.

**MARKET BY SEXUALITY**

The market does not identify potentially profitable expansionist niches merely by ethnicity or by economic class; a variety of other criteria are utilized including a trend towards targeting the homosexual community. For example, at the April, 1993 Gay Rights March in Washington, intense efforts were made to reach the gay community as potential customers. A gay marketing firm, Overlooked Opinions, distributed 500,000 event packets that included both event-related and commercial information in the form of flyers. One of the companies advertising in the packets was an 800-number telephone florist. Referring to the gay community, a Flowers Direct employee stated, "It is a customer we'd like to get. They have money, and they tend to send flowers." When questioned about the possibility of bad political associations with his company's name, the employee asked rhetorically, "Is there anything that doesn't have political overtones today?"

A beverage company that has been actively courting the gay market since 1988, Nora Beverages, donated 50,000 bottles of its spring water product to groups participating in the march, yet was not willing to supplement the offering with any direct advertising because, according to one of its spokespeople, "I don't need to have my banner up next to people who may be throwing eggs at Vice President Gore. It's not our image. And it's not controllable."

Why the business sector's attraction to the gay community? The average gay male household income is $51,624 and $42,755 for lesbians compared to the national average of $37,922. This disparity is related to the equally high level of education among the gay

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144 Ibid, p. 160.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
numbers, and the fact that gay consumers tend to be particularly brand-loyal (they even write thank-you notes to companies that advertise in gay publications), are the sources of influence, and not, as some might suspect, merely for a dose of politically-correct public relations.

According to the publisher of the gay magazine *Out*, "If you have somebody in the company that is politically supportive, you get one ad. They don't come back if they don't think it's a business decision." A spokesman for the advertisement agency representing Virgin Airlines, a company that has recently begun advertising in *Out*, "The point is not that they are a gay audience. They're an audience that we believe will give us a great return on our investment... The gay community has fantastic travel statistics."149

As the private sector becomes increasingly competitive, particularly because the economy is in poor shape and the largest firms are growing to gargantuan sizes (as in the airline industry), market niching offers greater opportunities for smaller companies to get a sufficient market share without having to compete with larger companies advertising to the mainstream consumer. "We have to go where the other airlines won't go. They can out muscle us. What we have to do is to be a little smarter and more nimble," according to the same representative of Virgin Airline's ad agency.

A similar example is CBS/Fox Video's attempt to increase demand for a gay-themed film to be released on video, *The Lost Language of Cranes*, without an expensive marketing effort. According to the promotions director, "The gay audience... pays much more attention to entertainment, and no one's ever serviced that niche. One of the things we've been able to do is educate retailers to the size of the market. They're in the video stores anyway, renting four to six videos each month."150

The whole phenomenon of reaching a previously marginalized target market like the gay community has been supported by the collection of data on it as a separate group. This effort to collect 'statistics' or even set up a marketing research company solely for the gay community are testament to the intensification of data gathering on numerous minority, non-mainstream communities in order to direct marketing campaigns at them. In theory at least, there will be a point where there is more than one advertiser per product pursuing the

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
least, there will be a point where there is more than one advertiser per product pursuing the gay market and the advantage of being the first in the door will vanish. "It's going to be a while before it dissipates to the point that it's just another ad. That will never happen until a gay person is just like any other person. That's not going to happen for a long time," says the publisher of Out. 151

As the market becomes more capable of producing goods and images to sell to more highly targeted market niches, three primary effects can be observed:

◊ There is an increase in the cultural or local identity of the population being targeted as the differences between each of the populations are heightened. This can have the positive effects of increasing group awareness, association, and pride which further strengthens the bonds of the individual to a group.

◊ A spatial component manifests itself in the exacerbated segregation of the city; some people creating new, separate communities and others left to congregate in the older, often decaying remains. Residential enclavism as seen in hilled estates, remote suburban tracts, exclusive urban condominiums, or gated communities is the result of the desire for stronger, more narrowly-defined community associations and the creation of market niches. Indoor malls and projects like CityWalk that theme and tailor their product to a defined population are merely the commercial and recreational end of this phenomenon. The effect is the same; a heightened sense of community and place for some, greater disillusionment and sense of disconnectedness for others, and the potential for a decreased level of interaction and thus tolerance across the board.

◊ As individuals become more identified to a smaller, more local association, it is often that their association or identification with larger, more inclusive and diverse groups becomes more tenuous. Furthermore, with a lack of interaction also comes the potential for a decrease in understanding and thus tolerance of others' behavior. In addition, with fewer common sources of information there is greater room for manipulation of that information.

151 Ibid.
TECHNOLOGY

... A society becomes 'modern' when one of its chief activities is producing and consuming images, when images that have extraordinary powers to determine our demands upon reality and are themselves coveted substitutes for firsthand experience become indispensable to the health of the economy, the stability of the polity, and the pursuit of private happiness.152

The application of technology, particularly in the fields of communications and information systems, is contributing to the shaping of the form of the public realm as a result of three primary societal influences: a shift from an emphasis on the consumption of goods to the consumption of experiences, the facilitation of heightened experiences, and the comparison of image versus spatial reality.

CONSUMPTION OF EXPERIENCES

People have traditionally utilized the public realm, and streets in particular, to do their daily errands or commute to work. The marketplace of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century European cities stirs notions of the epitome of the public realm: people throughout the local area interacting with one another as they purchase food for the daily meals. The food shopping was done by the women while the men walked the cobbled streets to their place of work or ran the shop below their residence. While the necessity of such interaction has greatly diminished, the technology that has relieved us of these 'burdens' is at the same time promoting our venturing outside of the home to different places, for different reasons and interacting with different groups of people.

Contributing to the changed orientation in the use of the traditional public sphere is that technology has enabled our society to meet many of its mundane needs from the home. Recent advances like the facsimile machine and electronic-mail allow for the transcendence of spatial and temporal constraints. We are just beginning to see how dramatically these instruments will shape our lives.

The Dutch magazine, *Home Bus Info*, has referred to the development of the post-industrial household as an "accelerating process of home automation." The more traditional notion of automation as a process that refers primarily to the efficiency of productivity in manufacturing, is now being applied to household processes of production, consumption, and leisure. This shift to the concept of the automated household is referred to by French political economists as "Neo-Fordism;" a process of economic and social restructuring "in which the long dominant system of Fordism is giving way to a new coherence of production. . .In this process, considerable transformations are occurring in the relation between work, leisure and consumption," and as particularly relevant to the public realm, "in the spatial organization of these activities."153

Information and communications technology has already begun to bring to the home many of the facilities we currently travel to utilize, such as offices, schools, theaters, markets and libraries. Some advocates of the 'computer home' speculate about a home with central computers that can speak with and respond to their human occupants, control home utilities and appliances, communicate with information sources on a neighborhood and global scale, and adjust the environment to the climate and the inhabitants' physiological needs.154 Vice President Gore's commitment to a 'telecommunication highway', shows the acknowledgment of the possibilities of such systems if not the great potential for such an infrastructure to be put in place.

Work patterns are also dramatically affected by recent technological advances. According to Robbins and Hepworth's article on "Electronic Spaces," "The fragmentation, dissemination and decentralization of production and, in this context, the emergence or re-emergence of the household as a workplace is becoming increasingly clear."155 Particularly in Los Angeles, where stringent air quality regulations, like those set by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Regulation XV, require that employers reduce the number of employee cars that come to their offices each day, it is becoming more common for people to work from the home.

In other cities, where the air quality concern is less immediate, but the traffic congestion concern is at least as great, similar examples can be found. In many cases, particularly in cities where land values are high, home-based tele-commuting has begun to emerge as a

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153 Robbins and Hepworth, p. 159.
154 Ibid.
155 Ibid., p. 161.
significant area of productive activity. Additionally, work patterns are affected by the electronic provision of services that have been traditionally transacted face-to-face. For example, services like health care and education are now offered through interactive television. The introduction in 1988 of Phillips' home interactive system, marketed as, "The future is already here," is an example of a household system that offers home banking, climate control, security, interactive video-discs, and even cooking by TV.

In addition to becoming the new locus of production, the household appears destined to become a transformed site of electronic consumption. This transformation in the activity and meaning of consumption, has begun to create a bifurcated consumer experience. One component is home-based consumption fueled by electronic catalogues and tele-shopping which allow a person to buy more from the privacy of his or her own home. It is already possible to have delivered to your home groceries, dinner and a movie, clothing, home appliances, tools, and compact discs. This privatizing of the consumer experience stems from the view that some forms of consumption are a mundane inconvenience that should be minimized as much as possible by the application of technology.

Another component facilitating the consumption of experiences is the proliferation of new arenas where it can occur. These arenas are primarily comprised of large-scale shopping centers, most often on the perimeter or outskirts of a central city, where people come more to be in a controlled entertainment environment than to purchase merchandise. These arenas therefore offer non-merchandise-based experiences for entertainment purposes. These are "post-modern retail environments where attention is shifted away from specific commodities to the act of consumption itself" and in which the point is to "intensify, glorify, and celebrate" the act of consumption. "This new scenery of aestheticized leisure consumption is the fantasy counterpart to the more functional electronic home consumption."

When telephones first became mass produced items it was predicted that the resultant ability to transcend spatial limits would preclude the need for people to travel to places they could suddenly reach by phone. Just the opposite occurred; the telephone facilitated business so well that people had many more reasons to travel and new places to visit. Similarly, telecommunications, at the very least, complements rather than substitutes for the physical

156 Ibid., p. 163.
157 Ibid., p. 164
158 Ibid.
movement of people. According to an article that appeared in *American Demographics* in 1986, the expansion of the U.S. economy has ceased to be driven by the production and accumulation of goods and has moved dramatically towards the consumption of sensory stimulating experiences. Although the distinction between 'having' and 'experiencing' is often almost indiscernible, an important separation exists between a consumer seeking a good and a consumer seeking an experience. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs suggests that once a society has become productive enough to satisfy its basic needs for food and shelter, its inhabitants begin to dedicate increasing proportions of their income to satisfy their 'inner needs'.

These inner needs are better met by information-rich experiences than by the tangible products of the industrial economy. The resultant experience industry, which formed to address this demand, "cultivates through education, broadens through travel, allows escape through psychotherapy, numbs through drugs and alcohol, edifies through religion, informs through reading, and enraptures through art." The assessment of value has shifted to a person's experiences from the products that help to create the experience. Responding to this shift, peddlers of traditional merchandise like clothing and food are putting an increasing emphasis on the 'shopping experience'. As the retail market becomes more competitive, particularly with the rise of home shopping via television or catalog, "more retailers will have to create positive shopping experiences to keep customers coming back."

The Southland corporation, owners of the vast 7-Eleven chain, has recognized this, admitting: "We are not in the grocery business, we are in the convenience business." The AMF Corporation, a manufacturer of sporting goods, is equally aware of the trend: "We sell week-ends." Because, unlike tangible merchandise, the consumption of experiences does not involve the accumulation of 'things', there is virtually no limit to its expansion. The homeostatic relationship that stimulated travel with the introduction of the telephone is also true today in terms of city form; the more people are isolated from one another, the more they will want to congregate for entertainment and recreation.

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160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
Facilitation of Heightened Experiences

Throughout history, the most advanced discoveries in technology have been applied to the promotion of fantasy. This is not surprising considering it has usually been those with the greatest financial resources who could afford both the leisure and the toys to evoke fantasy. For the aristocracy of the ancien régime, the desire for fantasy was manifested in the grand operas that were housed in opulent architectural shrines. While the storyline of an opera was usually based on a piece of revered literature or a significant historical event, the elaborate stage sets that relied on intricate pulley systems achieved perspectival feats that hinted of advances to come. The Eiffel Tower, created as part of a world's fair, itself perhaps the greatest institution of integrating cutting edge technology with fantasy, stands as the most recognizable icon to the application of technology for fantasy's sake.

Today, both the utilization of advanced technology and expressions of fantasy have been taken out of the aristocrat's pleasure palace, out of the monumental event's court, and transported into our daily existence. As fantasy-based experiences have become more widespread they have also developed into a greater variety of forms of expression. It is now possible to observe a spectrum of technologically-supported experiences that ranges from the most simplistic to the most participatory and 'realistic':

◊ **Watching:** On the most simplistic, yet most pervasive level, is the detached viewer experience of watching television. While viewers of a soap opera may begin to identify with the characters and become immersed in the story line, they remain (often against their will) solely an onlooker to a fantasy created by someone else. The same can be said for films, although the act of going out to see a particular film and sitting in a dark room focused primarily on the images on the screen may facilitate a slightly more enraptured and memorable experience.

◊ **Participating:** A heightened level of participation is created by the IMAX movies that transport the viewer to places and experiences that they could probably never have visited otherwise. Skydiving over the Grand Canyon or slashing through a tropical rain forest are displayed on mammoth screens with ultra-high quality sound systems. The special-format cameras catch the view with wide-angle lenses to provide an intense simulation of participating in the activities presented. This technology has now been taken one step further by coupling it with electronically-rigged theater seats that synchronize the movement of the seats with the screen's images. A rollercoaster ride
that was almost sickening to watch in an IMAX film can now be felt because of moveable seats that drop and lurch, and according to the press kit for CityWalk, allow audiences "to feel they are actually swerving on a scary roller-coaster." The experience is reliant upon "a patented motion picture filming and projection process that results in films that create a visual effect of extraordinary depth, clarity, and realism." 164

◊ **Traveling:** There is a strong link that can be made between the games children play and the type of recreational experiences they expect to have, perhaps making the theme park the ever-popular institution of familial recreation. These frontiers of fantasy, that are costly and remote, remain overtly as parks of fantasy detached from daily reality. 165 The technology involved in supporting the numerous experiences offered at Disneyland or Magic Mountain is of the most advanced levels applied to the creation of experiences. Parks like Disney World allow patrons a simulated experience of visiting distant and fictitious locales, and although these images may become part of a person's body of experience they do not serve as substitutes for physically visiting the mimicked sites. In fact, the images are often so tantalizing that they stimulate travel to the places they simulate.

◊ **Acting:** On a similar level as theme parks is the American craze for spectator sports. Whether it be in older, more traditional stadia like Fenway Park, or in newer ones that try to recreate that 'old-fashioned' feeling like the new Camden Yards in Baltimore, the entire baseball experience is supported by electronic and mechanical elements that provide not just an experience to be viewed, but rather one in which to participate. In Camden Yards, for example, baseball fans not only participate in civic boosterism as they are inspired by the view of Baltimore's skyline in the distance over the center-field wall, but they become extras in a production of the Golden Age of baseball. They contribute, along with the thousands of other Orioles fans, to producing a quintessential 1920s baseball experience. The fan plays a character that only paid employees play at theme parks.

◊ **Immersions:** At the most interactive and advanced level of technological participation is the world of virtual reality, also referred to as cyberspace. Strapping on a pair of 3-D

165 It should be recognized that all of the types of technology that produce fantasy-based experiences along the spectrum presented here can be found in any number of theme parks. It is thus somewhat artificial to separate theme parks as a category, but as destinations of recreation they are placed appropriately.
electronic goggles can give a viewer the impression of walking around inside an object, whether it be a room or a human lung. The goggles contain magnetic sensors connected to a computer so that each time the wearer moves his or her head the scene viewed in the goggles changes accordingly. This is just one medium for virtual reality which can "eliminate the separation between you and the computer. You're not interfacing with virtual reality. You are included within it." 166

According to a professor of virtual-reality technology, "We're building imaginary worlds, and we're helping put people in them. We're talking about a whole new universe. People will enter cyberspace to work, to play, to exercise, to be entertained. They will enter it when they wake up in the morning and will have no reason to leave it until the end of the day." 167

By the end of the decade, it is predicted that full-motion laser imagery as sharp as a photograph will be projected directly onto a person's retina, rendering display screens obsolete. "The better the simulation, the more absorbing the experience." 168 But even the most ardent supporters of the new technology and its potential for simulation admit that it will never replace the 'real' thing. "The physical world is infinitely subtle. Jaron Lanier, a leading designer in the field, asserts: "There is always something new to see, some unexpected detail or texture or event to discover... With wraparound, 3-D views and sensors that track your movements, video simulations can take you where you've never been before." 169 So while many experiences may be simulated through a simple pair of goggles the desire for 'authentic' experiences will actually increase.

All of these pop-culture expressions ultimately raise the expectations of people when they do venture into the public environment. Because the production of such experiences is heavily reliant on technologically-based images and other advanced media, environments that utilize these tools must be highly controlled. As the demand for increasingly fantasy-based experiences rises, so to must the levels of control of the spaces that offer them. If the marketplace is perceived as hungry for Disney-esque experiences, since the traditional public realm cannot readily offer them, there is an incentive for the private sector to continue to do so. CityWalk's four characteristics of simulation, distillation, theming, and

166 Doug Stewart, "Through the Looking Glass Into An Artificial World - Via Computer," ?
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
discrimination are all fundamentally rooted in high levels of control motivated by efforts to produce an environment full of enticing experiences.

**Heightened Expectations of Built-Environment**

To some, the natural environment and the built environment, at once manifesto and equipment for the future, have been replaced by an afterimage of what was on the picture tube one-thirtieth of a second ago. The conventional notions of the public and private, and of inside and outside, appear to be rendered meaningless. The physical boundaries of "traditional" place are being perforated, dissolved, and replaced by audiovisual protocols and advanced technology's regime. . .

It was 1893 when the belated 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America was celebrated in Chicago on a new scale of grandeur. Daniel Burnham's vision for the World's Columbian Exposition in the form of a "White City" had manifested itself along 600 acres of Lake Michigan waterfront to awe America and the world. The entirety of the Court of Honor and its adjacent Neo-classical style structures were constructed primarily out of plaster of Paris on temporary whitewashed frameworks, and although the buildings were gone only six months after the Fair closed, an indelible impression had been left on tens of millions of visitors from around the country and the world.

In his autobiography, Frank Lloyd Wright recounts a discussion with Daniel Burnham in which Burnham proclaimed, "The Fair is going to have a great influence in our country. The American people have seen the 'Classics' on a grand scale for the first time. . . I can see all America constructed along the lines of the Fair, in noble, dignified, Classic style. The great men of the day all feel that way about it -- all of them." 171

The Progressive Era reformist vision of how the cities could be aestheticized for the purpose of sheer enjoyment, and, more importantly, to instill civic pride in the hordes of recent immigrants, acting as the spoon stirring the stew of the national 'melting pot', was a substantial force behind the creation of the White City. The instant city stood in stark contrast to the black city just beyond its boundaries, where endless rows of insufficiently ventilated tenements channeled dead air from one overcrowded hovel to the next carrying tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. With such a stark contrast, and as Burnham mentions, the presentation of these alternative images for the first time to the general public.

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population, a powerful vision of what urban life could be stirred every visitor. "And for a
generation thereafter, Chicago's fabled 'White City' was an ideal to which every American
city aspired."172

Not everyone who gazed upon the White City was awed. Louis Sullivan, a contributing
architect on the Fair, expressed his fear: "Damage wrought by the World's Fair will last for
half a century from its date, if not longer. It has penetrated deep into the constitution of the
American mind, effecting there lesions significant of dementia."173 Wright, Sullivan's
most famous disciple, expressed his agreement during a conversation in which Burnham
touted the Classical legacy the Fair would leave: "Yes -- I know, Uncle Dan, you may be
quite right but somehow it strikes on my heart like -- jail."174 Despite their differences,
Burnham, Sullivan and Wright all agreed that the Exposition's images were powerful.
Whether booster or critic of classicism, these men recognized that the vision presented in
Chicago would eventually be recreated more permanently throughout the nation.

Days after traveling ten, hundreds or thousands of miles to ingest these magnificent
images, visitors were back home among either their own squalor or surrounded by others'.
With expectations raised to a degree by images never before imagined by most Americans,
their 'reality', the streets they walked each day and the buildings they worked or shopped
in, now paled in comparison; how could they not? Their public realm, however they chose
to define it, had to compete with the plaster world they visited in Chicago. As Susan
Sontag has observed of photography, "So successful has been the camera's role in
beautifying the world that photographs, rather than the world, have become the standard of
the beautiful."175 The result is not only a changed standard, but additionally as Sontag
asserts: "Knowing a great deal about what is in the world (art, catastrophe, the beauties of
nature) through photographic images, people are frequently disappointed, surprised,
unmoved when they see the real thing."176 The Fair left a similar legacy.

172 Herbert Muschamp, "The Niña, the Pinta, and the Fate of the 'White City,'" New York Times,
Nov. 8 1992, p.1
173 Craig, p. 220.
174 Ibid.
175 Sontag, p. 85.
176 Ibid., p. 148.
Figure 3.1 The White City of the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893.
What was the ultimate effect for visitors to the Fair of the political and economic reality that their cities would never have anything other than iconographic remnants of the Fair? Again using the analogy of a camera, Susan Sontag suggests of its function, "The present function is clear enough, if one considers in what context photographic images are seen, what dependencies they create, what antagonisms they pacify -- that is, what institutions they buttress, whose needs they really serve." As Sontag implies, the ultimate effect is a channeling of resources towards an ideal that usually serves those who are already the most well off. What are the implications for Los Angeles, particularly its impoverished neighborhoods ravaged by the riots of 1992, when those with money, education, influence, and/or power to improve these areas and the city as a whole consume idealized images of places like CityWalk? As highly controlled, privately developed, exclusive 'public spaces' continue to succeed economically, efforts to aid the ailing appendages of the city will face increasing complacency.

In the 1950s and 1960s Urban Renewal sought to remedy this negligence by creating, both literally and figuratively, a tabula rasa. Inner-city residents responded in the late 1960s after the delinquency of urban policy became intolerable by revolting in Los Angeles and other major urban centers. Almost another quarter century passed, again with little done to address the same persistent problems, and rebellion again engulfed our streets. Reflecting upon the Fair of exactly one hundred years ago and its subsequent legacy, Herbert Muschamp, architectural critic for the New York Times, asks: "So where's our Beautiful City? How come, instead of fountains and fireworks, the world's richest nation ended up with glass boxes along Sixth Avenue and burnt-out storefronts in South-Central Los Angeles? Today, the monuments of the City Beautiful movement loom like haunting reminders of a vision that failed to materialize." The private public realm has picked up where the City Beautiful movement left off.

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177 Ibid., p. 78.
178 Muschamp, p. 1
SEARCH FOR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Warning. Your neighbors are watching.\(^{179}\)

A trend that receives particular attention in the media is the spread of residential enclaves enclosed by a fence and often watched over by a private security force. With the residue of the urban riots that struck the nation in April of 1992 still at the front of many people's minds, the market for gated community homesteads appears to be healthier than ever. The rise in popularity of these developments reflects more than economic trends or consumerist leanings.

For all the press attention that gated communities get, rarely is it anything other than a one-dimensional portrayal of enclavism, walls, barbed wire, fear and their impact on property values. An article in the *Chicago Tribune* described the creation of gated communities: "Faced with dangerous crime and unwanted traffic, American neighborhoods from California to Georgia are hiding behind walls, gates and barbed wire in a last-ditch effort to protect homes and families -- and to keep real estate values up."\(^{180}\)

What are the driving forces behind this phenomenon? Discussion of the legal intricacies or the social implications are extremely important, but there is a deeper significance overlooked by those who merely express their disdain towards the inhabitants of these communities because they are there solely to protect their property values and keep away from 'undesirables'.

The key term involved in discussion of gated communities is in the name itself, "communities." The more cursory analyses of the popularity for this form of development (i.e. property values, crime, fear of strangers and the homeless, etc.) highlight components that are part of a greater search for a sense of community. The three forces discussed

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\(^{179}\) Guterson, p. 62. Sign on the garages in Green Valley, Nevada, a gated community near Las Vegas.

\(^{180}\) Tim Schreiner, "Suburban Communities 'Forting Up'," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Section A, date unknown, p. 1.
earlier in this chapter, fear, market segmentation, and technology also, therefore, are both contributors to and manifestations of the trend to return to a sense of community.

In California alone, 300,000 people currently reside in gated communities and fifty-one more gated communities are currently under construction. Analysts suggest that 'forting up' (the trend of moving into walled or gated communities) is reflective of a significant urban metamorphosis, psychological and economic, that is fed by "the desire for stability, privacy and security." An article in the San Francisco Chronicle suggests, "Moving to the suburb is no longer enough. People now feel the need to put a moat between themselves and an uncertain world." The key word here is "uncertain."

A prototypical, traditional neighborhood that is easily found in older European-style cities like New York and San Francisco, is one that is grounded in and founded upon a sense of certainty. Here, people are familiar with their neighbors, in touch with their physical environment, concerned about the quality of life for themselves and the area as a whole, close to a variety of amenities, and are at least relatively confident that they can walk outside safely. As these environments become less common, because the ones that exist are losing their sense of certainty to crime and drugs, the logical alternative is to create new ones from scratch, thus minimizing uncertainty. John Friedmann, head of planning at UCLA's Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, suggests that the logic behind gated communities is the "lack of trust in public order, so people become very defensive about their little life space."

People have resorted to creating their own public realm because the one the city at-large offers is no longer meeting their needs. This is in part because of the decreased safety of streets and other public spaces, and partly because of heightened expectations of what the public realm should afford them. Crime, property values, and desire for relative homogeneity (perhaps 'racism') are the three driving forces, but all can be explained in terms of desire for a sense of community. Developments like CityWalk, marketed as safe 'people places', are exploiting the same shortcomings of the civic public realm for commercial purposes that gated communities have exploited for residential ends.

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181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
The suburbs were for many Americans an escape from a plethora of urban social and economic ills. When those aspects of urban life found their way to suburbia, there was no way to avoid them. Master planners recognized the opportunity for and new market and began to build gated communities -- it's part of the evolution of suburbs. A new resident of the gated Green Valley, Nevada, and recent transplant from Southern California, substantiated this: "Even the good neighbors there aren't good anymore. You don't feel safe in L.A." Another Green Valley resident said, "And in San Diego, where we lived before, there were these . . . forces, if you know what I mean. There were too many things we couldn't control. Drugs and stuff. It wasn't healthy for our kids." For these people and the many others they represent, a gated community offered the control necessary to provide the desired sense of community.

**Symbolic Extensions Of Community**

Another example of an extension of control over the public realm to create an increased sense of community was the construction of an eruv by the Jewish community of Brookline, Massachusetts. The purpose of an eruv can be seen as a loophole for a traditional religious practice. The practice adhered to by all Orthodox Jews is that one does not 'carry' (among numerous other restrictions) during the twenty-five hours that comprise the Sabbath from the beginning of sundown on Friday to the end of sundown on Saturday. While the term 'carry' has a subjective meaning, it regards the holding of something on one's person aside from clothing.

By physical definition, the Brookline eruv is the linking of 18 miles of existing chain-link fences along the turnpike, steel poles connected by plastic twine, and plastic tubing nailed to 800 telephone poles that encompass portions of three communities. Like any more typical planning project, it came about after an extensive political and bureaucratic process spanning over thirty years of effort. Its creation required the permission from all affected private property owners and municipal agencies.

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184 Guterson, p. 65. No community, no matter how controlled, appears able to completely escape social evils. In Green Valley a resident committed three rapes in the neighborhood, outsiders and residents committed burglaries, and children use LSD and crystal methane in High School.
185 *ibid.*
The result for young families has been the ability for the whole family to go to the synagogue together on the Sabbath now that infant children can be pushed in strollers, thus bringing the children and their mothers who used to stay home with them to the synagogue. One beneficiary of the new freedom, a young father of four, exclaimed, "Let me tell you, since the eruv has been up, our synagogue has been packed. I think this will revitalize the traditional Jewish community."\textsuperscript{187} This gentleman's wife concurred, remarking that, "I haven't been able to go to the synagogue on Shabbat for the last three years. Now everybody sees each other and it snowballs."\textsuperscript{188} An aged woman crippled by arthritis, who had not gone to synagogue for two years because of being confined to a wheelchair, now can be pushed by a friend on Shabbat. She exclaimed, "I really have missed it. The prayers. And socially. My whole social life is there." The eruv represents a "symbolic extension of the private domain into a communal one."\textsuperscript{189}

**Freedom versus Community**

A popular urban planning model subject of criticism for promoting enclavism is the Neo-traditional movement. Made famous by the husband and wife design team of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and in particular by their creation of Seaside, Florida, this model has gained much academic and professional recognition. Like the movement it effectuates, Seaside is founded on the principle of creating an old-fashioned town in which the pedestrian is king, the car is marginalized, and architectural continuity prevails. As in many of its gated counterparts, restrictions have been placed on every component of the town's layout: street widths, lot sizes, building forms, signage, house paint, and even door knobs.

Seaside best elucidates the contemporary urban public life dilemma: a choice between freedom and community. The choice is growing more black and white; either you remain steadfast in an open, relatively unrestricted urban community and confront a variety of elements that urge retreat, or gather comfortably behind walls and gate in what meets your definition of a community, but submit to a highly controlled environment.

\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Ibid.}
Sennett, in his seminal study of the public realm, *The Fall of Public Man*, argues: "To the extent, for instance, that a person feels he must protect himself from the surveillance of others in the public realm by silent isolation, he compensates by baring himself to those with whom he wants to make contact."\(^{190}\) CityWalk presents this same dichotomy; it offers a very controlled 'public space' that does allow a variety of segments of the Los Angeles population to gather and interact. No space in a city is completely free of restrictions, at least on behavior and access, and no public space, no matter how 'public' it is, can ever meet the needs of every subgroup that exists in a major city like Los Angeles. Therefore, a determination is required on what level of control and how broad an attraction a space need to have for it to succeed financially and contribute positively to the public life of the city. It is this dilemma and the issues which it embodies that provide a serious challenge for planners and designers.

\(^{190}\) Sennett, p. 15.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUTURE OF
THE PUBLIC REALM
Scenario for the Future

Consider the following scenario:
The greater metropolitan area has been growing at a staggering pace, jumping from only tens of thousands to over one million residents in just thirty years. The predominantly middle and upper class Caucasian white-collar professionals have not arrived unaccompanied; the area has become a center for high-tech business. Companies like Westinghouse and AT&T have contributed to an industrial base in which Patriot missiles, infrared sights for nighttime warfare, simulators for smart bomb-dropping pilots, and wind tunnel technology to simulate skydiving are all designed here. Together, they have provided an employment rate three times the national average. In the service sector alone, employment has grown 140% over the last few years.

Why are so many people and companies flocking here? According to one resident, people are attracted here because they know it is a safe environment. Not only safe from crime, but also sheltered from bad climate and the lack of entertainment opportunities. Further, the city offers relief from many of the distressing complications of more traditional cities. The most obvious relief is from the climate; sunny, warm days are the norm here. Secondly, the open and flat natural landscape is a constant reminder of the freedom, creativity, and opportunity this environment offers. Any responsibility to the past, to the burdens that accompany history, are also not here to encumber the aura of stability. And last, the calm of ethnic homogeneity supplies an escape from the disconcerting possibility of conflict, preserving a sense of comfort and community. Another resident bragged how her city’s streets were free from homeless people and panhandlers.

The point of this idyllic land is not just to avoid certain realities, but to be immersed in new, more pleasant ones. The typically mundane aspects of daily life have been transformed into a constant variety of themed experiences, including restaurants with Arabian Nights or Medieval themes, shops like Christmas World and Waterbedroom Land, and a golf course designed as a replica of a famous old course in Scotland.

It was only twenty years ago that an endless sea of orange groves dominated both the local landscape and economy. With the last orange tree turned to garden mulch, and their only remnants as souvenir shop miniatures that bear real fruit, freshly stuccoed gated residential developments dominate the panorama. One of the new communities is Celebration, a gated
collection of million-dollar homes that line streets themed in the styles of Charleston and Venice. The 'joyous' residents have access to a grocery store with computerized carts that display suggested menus, an industrial technology showcase for the 'recreational arts', and a cultural center known as a 'learning resort'. Conveniently moored only miles away is the world's largest cruise ship which is promoted as a convergence of the best aspects of civilization that create a more full lifestyle. The quarter-mile-long vessel, known as Phoenix World City, offers hotels, casinos, a 100,000-volume library, and complete residential villages for its 6,000 permanent and temporary residents.

Supplementing the city's diverse entertainment opportunities, an Indian guru of transcendental meditation and a popular magician have proposed Vedaland, a 50-acre theme park intended to elevate Americans to a higher consciousness. Vedaland's neighbors include the headquarters of the Campus Crusade for Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saint's 10,000-family community.

For all the varied residential and recreational offerings, the strong employment base, and the pleasant climate, the city's true lure is its safe and clean traditional character. The stainless streets, tree planters free of cigarette butts, and 'civilized' behavior of its residents creates a soothingly sanitized environment free from contemporary urban distractions. As one resident proudly boasted, that living here sends him back to a lost moral, clean era.

There is an alternative face to this pristine settlement in which superficial priorities have led to neglect of long-term planning needs. Civic leaders, for example, complain their city lacks a sense of community responsibility. A local politician mourned how difficult it has been to govern when the city has no vision for itself. Although the city's symphony orchestra almost folded due to the lack of community support, the new 15,000-seat sports arena has been filled to capacity for every home game of the local professional basketball team. More alternative civic pride may be expressed if they get an expansion baseball team to play in their proposed old-time, intimate style baseball park.

Traffic problems further highlight the city's misguided priorities. The main interstate running through the center of town is at a standstill during rush hour. The existing six-lane highway will require at least twenty-two lanes by 2000, yet there has been no agreement on what public transportation system should be put in place. There was discussion about creating a modern elevated railway system, yet funds have been earmarked for the creation of an old-fashioned trolley line and not the railway.
The last remains of what might be considered a traditional public environment is being extinguished by a variety of other neglected matters, including overcrowded schools, increasing poverty among the service workers, and the environmental degradation of the lakes and wetlands. These issues persist unaddressed primarily for three reasons: one, the residents' values are primarily superficial and therefore long-term issues are marginalized; two, because 'insulation breeds indifference', and most of the city's residents are able to avoid unsightly realities, there has been a continual unwillingness to raise taxes for any reason; and third, residents have inflated expectations of their environment because they live in the shadow of a major source of fantasy, a theme park.

The above scenario is not a prognostication of what life may be like at an undetermined point in the future, instead it describes an existing environment; this is Orlando, Florida. Although Orlando's relationship to Disney World, the most visited theme park in the world, may appear to make its circumstances seem unique, just the opposite is true. Orlando suggests clues to the future development of our cities and how the 'gospel of Disney' will continue to infiltrate the spheres of architecture and urban planning.

CityWalk, dreamed up and designed by two men who consider themselves students of Walt Disney, is testament to a similar, yet smaller intervention. The city of Las Vegas could have also been the locale behind this disguised prediction.

Orlando is a unique case because it is an outcropping of Disney World, just as CityWalk is unique because of its relation to Universal Studios. The substantiation for analyzing either of these projects is that the private sector is motivated to build them and that people patronize them. As such developments increase in popularity, other developers will continue to propose projects throughout the country with similar characteristics. Orlando residents are not there to live near Disney World, they are there to live the dream of Disney World. Like the disturbance of a pond after a rock is cast into it, ripples emanate from the epicenter and move ever outwards, carrying remnants of the initial point of displacement to the far reaches of the body of water that seemingly had no direct relationship to the rock. Both Disney World and Universal are large and influential rocks that will transport their influence to welcoming landowners and developers throughout the country and the world. Orlando is itself proof to the possibility for such a phenomenon to occur, for it is not the

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191 Some of the described developments have only been proposed and are not constructed. Most of the information that comprises this scenario was provided by: Priscilla Painton, "Fansay's Reality," *Time*, Cover story, May 27, 1991, pp. 52-58.
Figure 4.1 A guide to fantasies present and yet to come; Orlando, Florida.
native land of Disney or Universal creations, yet it is home to the sequels of both Disneyland and Universal Studios.

Orlando is the premier example of a community that imitates an imitation of a community. Its origins can be traced to Disney's concept for EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow) which he envisioned as a glass dome to seal in a new community of stores, offices, churches, parks, marinas, golf courses, a monorail, temporary residents that followed a code of dress and behavior, and a central computer to control it all. But Disney gave up on that dream upon the realization that creating such a highly controlled community would require the subsidization of its residents to attract them there.\textsuperscript{192}

Today, EPCOT is a permanent world's fair comprised of a celebration of technology and a distilled showcase of eleven foreign lands. One EPCOT visitor remarked, "It's probably much cleaner here than some of countries you would go to."\textsuperscript{193} It is this same sentiment that fuels the popularity of Orlando and will fuel the attraction to CityWalk. "But even Wally, ambitious social engineer that he was, might have been taken aback by the adoption of his commercial vision as Orlando's urban-planning model," notes the author of a cover story on Orlando in \textit{Time}.\textsuperscript{194} The author of a book on the local anthropology of Florida agrees: "It's not clear where Disney World begins and ends."\textsuperscript{195} Orlando and its offspring have composed a new psychological frontier, a launching point for a culture that revels in the superficial, the themed, and the sanitized.

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 54.
Is the retreat to controlled, simulated, and exclusive environments indicative of an effort to get away from something or to get to something? What fuels the success of mega-malls? 

**Answer:** people are there, certain types of people are not there (panhandlers and criminals primarily), a world of illusion is readily available, and it is all delivered in a distilled package of entertainment. The popularity of malls is not testament to the imminent death of American public life, it is a materialization of the yearning for a new public life, one divergent from our romantically adhered to notion of the public realm. CityWalk similarly tries to bring us back to this dearly held place in our hearts, the traditional public sphere typified by pedestrian street activity.

Is a call to a 900 phone number party line a desire to privatize or insulate one's entertainment and socialization? Or is it a sign of peoples' desire to reach out and interact with strangers, but in a limited, non-committal, and controlled manner. For that matter, is the proliferation of gated residential communities an expression of the desire to retreat from the troubling complexities of urban reality or should we explore more deeply to reveal that people are coming together and attempting to create their own territory where they feel in control and comfortable enough to be communal? Faneuil Hall Marketplace is so popular, the first stop for visitors to Boston, not for the fantasy of returning to a nineteenth-century marketplace, but the qualities that such a marketplace offered: variety, food, and lots of other people. In the instances where environments fail people, inadequately supplying the places they need in order to interact with others yet still feel in control, there results in a push for the creation of new public territories.

In contrast to the prevailing polemic, we are not losing our public realm, instead we are witnessing the shift from a singular form to a multiplicity of forms. There will always be a public realm, or a variety of forms that it takes, it is a permanent, yet dynamic fixture of human settlements. If we as planners and designers cannot offer adequate outlets of what is often a latent need by citizens to express themselves publicly, and if we do not examine our working definitions of the public realm so that we can allow our notions of it to take on more flexible and healthy new forms, we will fail our cities and the public for whom we work. While much of the planning profession is still devoted to retaining the civic quality of the downtown, instilling it with cultural institutions and high-design architecture, the development and quality of the bulk of our contemporary public realm languishes at the perimeter.
The distinction between the *civic* public realm and the *private* public realm is one that will continue to become more polarized. The civic public realm, composed of those 'common' spaces that are owned by some form of government and/or that remain beyond the boundaries of the private realm, are as a whole in decline. The two spheres are often indistinguishable, yet the private public realm, comprised of the spaces and modes of communication that offer a degree of publicness sufficient to be considered by some as public, and are privately owned (even if public funds contributed to their creation and maintenance), are proliferating and growing in significance. Michael Sorkin, editor of *Variations On a Theme Park*, has argued: "This impulse to a new urban segregation seems ubiquitous: throughout America, city planning has largely ceased its historic role as the integrator of communities in favor of managing selective development and enforcing distinction."\(^{196}\) What follows is an unveiling of an ecology of the forms of the public realm that will be at the forefront of planning efforts well into the new millennium.

**THE CIVIC PUBLIC REALM**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

As we witness the introversion of many of our public spaces and the bottling of our streets into ever-larger aggregations known as malls, there remain spaces in between which will persist to play a significant role in public life. These spaces, which may anatomically be referred to as the 'lungs' and 'arteries' of urban settlements, can be considered as the urban public infrastructure — the underlying foundation or basic framework of the urban system. No matter how segmented or enclaved the form of our cities become, the infrastructure will persist and maintain itself as a component of the public realm.

Places that aggregate people for the purpose of work will endure. Regardless of whether the automobile or public-transit reigns as the dominant transportation mode, people will always utilize some form of a shared transportation corridor to get to their place of business. These are the cities' arteries.

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There will remain a strong desire to maintain natural wonders or other large components of the landscape which are of such a grand scale that they will continue to attract visitors from diverse locales and backgrounds. Yosemite National Park or the Grand Canyon, both of which are not accessible to a substantial portion of American society and have numerous restrictions on their use, will always bring a variety of people together and remain as cherished natural gems to which many Americans will identify and take pride. These landscapes and their local counterparts, parks, are the environment's lungs.

Lastly, the curious nature of humankind will persist; there will always be people who desire to venture beyond their controlled, homogenized and sanitized locality. As our local spheres become more uni-dimensional, more all-encompassing, there will be a heightened yearning to go beyond them and interact with different spheres, the more different the better.

**Proprietary Spaces**

These are places in the city which bring together groups of people, often of diverse backgrounds, for a common cause related to a physical component of the urban or rural landscape. A space in the city or a significant piece of landscape may embody common interests for a variety of people, and can thus draw them together. Although the communalness of this form is rooted in an actual physical place or series of spaces, it is not based on its shared use or access. The publicness of these spaces is derived from an overlap of interests and values that establishes over them a shared sense of propriety.

The most familiar of this form of the public realm is often grounded in the environmental and ecological landscape movements in which various individuals come together to preserve, create or improve a piece of the natural landscape. Walden Pond, Henry David Thoreau's home during and inspiration for composing Walden, itself a manifesto for the early environmental movement, has come under threat by nearby development and subsequently drawn a high-profile coalition of activists which includes musicians and television/film celebrities. These notables, most of whom reside thousands of miles away from the pond in Concord, Massachusetts, are driven by a sense of symbolic ownership that brings them to work on behalf of preserving the space along with locals who benefit more directly from its presence.
Other examples of such joint proprietorship have formed for reasons other than in response to a threat. The Southwest Corridor in Boston, for example, is an extensive linear park formed over an old railroad right-of-way that had been cleared for the never-constructed Southwest Expressway and which runs through a number of neighborhoods of varying income and ethnicity. Each neighborhood that abuts a portion of the corridor not only benefits by having an adjacent open space in which to recreate or just enjoy as a reprise amidst intense urbanity, but also from having an accessible link to a continuous series of other, distinct spaces. The spaces may be enjoyed individually or as part of a whole, taking a pedestrian or biker from the relative low density of Jamaica Plain all the way to the richness of Boston's historic urbanity. Accompanying the duality of use opportunities is a dual sense of proprietorship. One sense is local, emanating from the contiguous open space as expressed through community participation in its design and maintenance, and the other from a regional sense that creates for all of the communities along it a commonality (or shared interest) that did not exist previously.

THE PRIVATE PUBLIC REALM

ASPATIAL

Not too far into the new millennium, telecommunications systems will allow an individual's telephone to link with cable-TV systems, telephone networks, satellite broadcasts and multimedia libraries from any part of the world. These forms of information and communication technology will allow the formation of 'virtual communities' that will flourish as the cost of transmitting voices and images keeps falling; electronic-mail and their bulletin boards are current popular examples.\[197\]

The Boston Globe has an occasional column using an E-mail format for college student readers. One article sprouted from the author sending out a question on an E-mail bulletin board. The article was an edited transcript of the conversation between five students (from five different Boston area universities) and the author. The contributing students had never met one another, yet they rebutted each others' comments by addressing the previous contributor by his or her first name (i.e. "Jack, I agree with what you, but . . .").

Educational courses have also been taught with the same technology, drawing students from around the world whom the professor never meets in person.

Our transportation routes used to serve the double purpose of facilitating movement as well as the primary source of interaction and information. This is shifting to where streets are either dedicated to movement or have been made into themed experiences. Now that information relies on the aspatial form of a fiber optic infrastructure, the ability to communicate with nearly any point on the globe, cheaply and expediently, allows for relationships to be created and associations to be formed that serve many of the needs a more traditional urban public space would.

EXPERIENTIAL

The Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota is comprised of four-hundred specialty stores, 4.2 million square feet, four major department stores and 13,000 parking spaces. Of the eighty-eight football field's worth of space on its four floors, only forty-four are used for retailing. The remaining space is dedicated primarily to Camp Snoopy, the world's largest indoor amusement park, with seven acres comprised of a rollercoaster, waterfall, and carousel. Each of the mall's four corridors is designed along a theme, either "hi-tech," "park-like," "European village," or a "1920s Grand Hotel."198 With an expected 40 million customers a year, a third originating from more than 150 miles away, and a tourism director to manage their visits, the Mall of America will draw more customers annually by 1996 than Disney World or the Grand Canyon.

The days of aimless mall browsing are slowing as one-stop warehouse-like discount chains and shopping via television or catalogue gain an increasingly significant share of the merchandise market. These are rarely mediums for pleasure, and the American recreational experience is significantly intertwined with consumption, thus the megamall (and its smaller cousins) addresses an unsaturated market. As libraries, city halls, chapels, schools, and museums relocate in malls along with clubs, gourmet restaurants, and hi-tech movie-based attractions, the notion of the mall as a significant component of public life, expressed as an experience in itself, becomes all the more conceivable.

The mall is of course only one of the manifestations of experientially-based places that bring people out of their homes and otherwise-segregated neighborhoods to common places where they interact with others. Theme-parks, movies, spectator sports, museums, and themed traveling like eco-tourism, and developments like CityWalk are all examples. The desire for an escape, the ability to provide the escape, and the need to gather with others are fueling a demand for experience-based recreation which developers are happy to appease. This demand differs from that of fifty to one hundred years ago in that the spaces people seek are now more highly controlled.

We live in a post-industrial era in which the national and local economies are based on producing services rather than manufacturing tangible goods. Similarly, our needs for recreation and 'fulfillment' can no longer be met simply with the consumption of goods, but increasingly require experiences that transport us to other times and places. This has been true in recent years and will continue long into the future, playing significant role in the form and personality of the American city.

**COMMUNAL ENCLAVES**

Communal enclave are places that bring people together to reside or recreate in spaces that are separately demarcated and somehow physically and socially segregated from other parts of the city, whether it be due to a remote location or physical barriers like gates and walls. Their purpose is most apparently to insulate their residents from the perceived grime, crime and sin of the city and elevate property values. On a more fundamental level, they fulfill an essential component of the American dream: to be part of a vibrant, secure and intimate community that offers a distinct identity as 'home'.

Residential communities encompassed by gates or walls will continue to be a response by the development community to both meet and stimulate the demand for an environment defined by a sense of certainty and community. The Neo-traditional planning movement, has attempted to offer a more subtle alternative, creating walkable villages and grand open spaces, but the degree of control required to meet its defined level of conformity offers little freedom of expression, extremely limited access, and a homogenized slice of society.
All of these forms of the public realm, like those since the inception of the notion of the public, are characterized by some level of control. What has changed is the 'acceptable' level of control, which will continue to increase until some of the central problems that currently confront our cities and society are addressed, such as: racism and its resultant segregation, the insufficient and inequitable education system, increasing poverty, a the reliance on alcohol and drugs, and rampant crime and violence. These are complex issues that may never be remedied or not at least until well into the next millennium.

Given the forbidding nature of these issues, it is likely that the characteristics of simulation, distillation, theming, and exclusion of public spaces that CityWalk demonstrates, and the forces of fear, market segmentation, technology, and a search for a sense of community that encourage their persistence, will remain as significant contributors to the control of our urban environments for years to come. As private control of the public sphere expands and the defenders of the public realm (planning boards and agencies) remain confused about its definition, the quality of public life in our cities will be increasingly determined by the profit-based decisions of the private sector.
THE BCDC
MEETS CITYWALK

I introduced the discussion of the public realm by setting forth a problem: the guardians of the public realm (exemplified by the BCDC) are having difficulty promoting its interests because they are unclear what it is. I asserted that both a result and a cause of the weak line of defense is the trend of increasingly controlled private projects (exemplified by CityWalk) which are fulfilling public needs that the civic sphere is not. Faced with this predicament, an agency like the BCDC might respond in two ways. One, they could broaden their purview to extend their control over the private public environment. Two, if they are concerned about retaining the places that adhere to their ideal of public life, they could exercise greater control over the existing civic environment. Both responses require extensions of control.

So what if the BCDC would have a chance to review CityWalk? What preliminary questions would I suggest they ask of the project in light of the arguments I have presented?

WHY IS THIS PROJECT BEING BUILT?
It is essential to understand the motivations behind a project's development to reveal the ways in which the civic realm is dissipating. What is CityWalk providing that the civic realm is not? The Commissioners must answer this question if they are to preserve what remains of the civic realm. I have explored the contributions of fear, technology, market segmentation, and the search for a sense of community to the erosion of the civic sphere, but there are other forces at play that also need to be monitored. The more aware the Commissioners are of these complex forces the better equipped they will be to address them.

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT?
Because the operational definition of the public differs from an abstract ideal, the segments of the population that are being addressed by such a development must be clarified. Is this for tourists or locals? Is it upscale or middlebrow? Such a determination facilitates the fulfilling of three responsibilities to the promotion of the public realm.
First, the evaluation of benefits and impacts in terms of their equity. Second, the assessment of which groups should be solicited for their input. And third, the determination of which components of the project are pertinent to the quality of public life and therefore warrant the Commission's attention.

**IS THIS AN APPROPRIATE EXTENSION OF PRIVATE CONTROL?**

By inquiring about the suitability of the control the project utilizes there is a forced recognition that to create a good public realm there must be control. There are too many dynamic forces at play resculpting the form of the public environment for it to adhere to its traditional, heterogeneous ideal. This does not mean that the ideal should be discarded, especially in cities like Boston and New York where much of a traditional public realm still exists, but that there should be recognition of how its definition needs to be modified in accordance with contemporary urban pressures.

The BCDC must set standards for the level of private control that complements their vision for the city's public life. With each new project like CityWalk, the general citizenry and planners become more at ease with a distilled, simulated, themed, and discriminating concept of public space. As we persist to accept highly controlled projects like these to serve as the crux of our public realm, the less controlled civic realm will continue to dissipate for lack of a constituency. Bodies like the BCDC must therefore safeguard spaces that promote uninhibited interaction among diverse groups of people, or exercise its own form of control to promote a place for these spaces in the city.

**WHAT FORM OF THE PUBLIC REALM IS IT?**

An attempt to categorize CityWalk into one of five forms of the public realm ensures the vital recognition of the emerging multiplicity of forms. This type of analysis and introspection will allow for a reevaluation of the often myopic priorities that currently fix the guardians' attention on the traditional civic core while neglecting emerging and now dominant forms of the public environment. Until we recognize that a substantial portion of the public realm has moved to the mall, to the theme park, to gated communities, and to CityWalk, we will continue misguided and derelict in our responsibilities to the suburban fringe, the decaying inner-city, and to those whom we are ultimately accountable, the public.
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