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# CONSTRUCTING INEQUALITY

## City Spaces and the Architecture of Citizenship

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Our urban problem is how to revive the reality of the outside as a dimension of human experience.

—Richard Sennett<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of Western political thought has its roots in thinking about cities and citizenship. Although they would not be considered urban in modern terms, the Greek city-states embodied the elements that continue to characterize city life—density, diversity, publicity, cultural vitality, and political power. Greek political philosophy emerged through critical contemplation of these concrete cities; it engaged a variety of political and ethical themes, including—for Aristotle in particular—the problems of citizenship in a context of formal equality and material inequality.

In the intervening centuries, political theorists have continued to explore a multitude of political and ethical questions, but not necessarily in terms of the city. Attention has more often focused on elements like the state, the nation, the social contract, the individual, or the community (the latter frequently with a marked anti-urban bias). The study of cities within the discipline of political science has been too often left to those who focus on the policy process and the efficient delivery of services.<sup>2</sup> This essay attempts to reconnect political theory to the study of cities by probing the link between built environment, public life, and democratic politics. By doing so, we can discern critical and troubling dynamics shaping contemporary democratic citizenship in this inegalitarian social context.

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Contemporary theorists of the public sphere have stressed its role as a nonstate arena of communicative interaction, a central space of opinion formation. But if we expand our focus on the public sphere to encompass the built environment that helps constitute that “sphere,” we can see that it is also significant as a space of attention orientation, a space that shapes citizens’ sense of what people, perspectives, and problems are present in the democratic public. In this essay, I argue that the architecture of our urban and suburban lives provides a hostile environment for the development of democratic imagination and participation. From Bentham to Foucault and beyond, social theorists have recognized the role of architecture in constructing subjectivity. But the built environment also constructs intersubjectivity, and it is the form of intersubjective relations currently being generated and entrenched that is especially pernicious: the world is being constructed, quite literally, in ways that adversely affect how we regard politics and who we recognize as fellow citizens.

This adverse regard, this particular form of intersubjective relations, is propagated by contemporary practices of city-building, which I detail below to analyze their impact and publicize their range and reach. These practices materialize particular versions of “home” and of “the public”; they work not simply to privatize formerly public spaces, but to purify both public and private space—especially to purify them of fear, discomfort, or uncertainty. The achievement of such purity is in the end impossible, but its pursuit has real and dangerous consequences. Hyperrealized notions of home and purified versions of public space enact deep forms of *segregation*, which thus needs to be reanimated as a critical political lens for thinking about contemporary democratic life. I argue further that this contemporary quest for purity and safety is not just a result of citizen neuroses or biases, but is provoked, energized, and sustained by political institutional practices and policies. Thus, in the end, I suggest an approach that focuses on redesigning the institutional context in which citizens’ interactions and decisions take place.<sup>3</sup>

### I. OUTSIDE, IN THE PRESENCE OF STRANGERS

As Jane Jacobs pointed out many years ago, “To any one person, strangers are far more common in big cities than acquaintances. More common not just in places of public assembly, but more common at a man’s own doorstep.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the paradigmatic characteristic of cities is that they are places where strangers regularly encounter one another in a variety of social spaces, including “at one’s own doorstep.” This encounter with strangers is central to

what Richard Sennett has called “the outside as a dimension of human experience.”<sup>5</sup> Sennett’s understanding of “the outside” and of relations between strangers provides a particularly useful conceptual lens through which to critique contemporary city-building practices.

What is “the outside”? If we refer to the inside as a dimension of human experience, it evokes the domain of the psychological, of inner life or authentic self. It also evokes a more familial sense of privacy and intimacy. Sennett has famously argued that this conception of self and of intimate relations has become the predominant focus of modern life; close, warm, revelatory relations with others are presumed to be the genuinely humane and morally privileged activity of self. The result is “the fall of public man”—a denial of the value of an expressly public identity and mode of interacting.<sup>6</sup> This argument will remind many political theorists of Hannah Arendt’s attempt in *The Human Condition* to vitalize a sense of public identity that relies not on the uncovering of a deep psychological self, but on the creative disclosure of a public self through speaking and acting with nonintimate others.

Two central elements are involved in Arendt’s and Sennett’s shared sense of public life. The first is the presence of multiple and diverse perspectives.

The reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself. . . . Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life.<sup>7</sup>

Sennett examines how the awareness of multiple perspectives can be created, sustained, and reflected in city design and architecture. He uses the example of the Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

The charged experience of the Piazza del Popolo comes from how perspective creates movement in the city, turning the person in its web of streets outside the sufficiencies of his or her own perception, searching for where to go next, aware that no single point of view gives a pilgrim the answer. . . . There is a sense of limits established on the powers of people to control what they see.<sup>8</sup>

This sense of limits on individual control is the second shared characteristic of Arendt’s and Sennett’s idea of public space. The public is a place of risk, uncertainty, incompleteness.<sup>9</sup> The outside, as Sennett points out, is a realm of exposure. This is true in the sense of stimulation and learning—as in being “exposed to a diversity of opinions,” exposed to complexity or unexpectedness, to that which is puzzling, different, or new. But exposure also has another meaning, one that has come to be overwhelming—vulnerability,

exposure to hurt and danger, unsafe because not inside. Referring to this second sense, Sennett says, "The way our cities look reflects a great, unreckoned fear of exposure."<sup>10</sup> These two senses of exposure can blur into one another; to be exposed to the stranger, one who perceives the world from a different social location, is to be exposed to danger.

This mingling of the two senses of exposure is manifest in the material practices I describe below. Let me note that these practices should not be viewed with nostalgia for some disappearing version of social space. My argument is not that through building modern urban and suburban life we have "lost" the public realm, but rather that the possibility of achieving a genuinely public realm inhabited by multiple "we"s is blocked through these practices. These practices are inequalitarian because they produce the illusion of safety for some at the expense of actual danger and discomfort for others; they are undemocratic both because of that inequity and because they attempt to substitute one perspective for many, and in a way that obscures its singularity.

## *II. INSIDE, POLICING THE BOUNDARIES*

For the purposes of this essay, the story begins in the suburbs. Suburbs are not a new phenomenon by any means, but suburban development blossomed after World War II. Over the years, many critics have condemned the suburbs for their sterility and uniformity, for their isolating and segregating effects on social life, and for the way they drain resources from the city. Contemporary developments in suburbs and "edge cities" continue and expand this trend. Perhaps the most publicized development is the rise of gated communities, residential developments that limit access to residents, their guests, and service people. Such enclaves have long been available for the very rich, but the significant current trend is that it is the middle class who is increasingly "forting up." Estimates of the number of Americans who live in gated communities range from 4 million to 8 million and rising.<sup>11</sup> Although gated communities strongly evince a desire for protection and security, the form of the community (and literally the form of the "gate") varies widely. Blakely and Snyder's 1994 survey suggests three general types of gated communities. "Lifestyle" enclaves are primarily retirement communities, ones gated to ensure limited access to amenities like golf courses; "elite" communities are gated primarily for prestige and social distinction; and "security zone" communities are ones where "fear of crime and outsiders is the foremost motivation for defensive fortifications."<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that the latter type includes not simply expensive new developments (with manned gatehouses,

twenty-four-hour patrols, and video surveillance). Barricades are also erected in already existing neighborhoods to protect the property and property values of exclusive inner-city and suburban “perches.”<sup>13</sup>

Middle-class gated communities are a subset of a wider, more insidious phenomenon—what is now the predominant mode of new housing construction. This is what Evan McKenzie calls “common interest developments” (CIDs) or “planned unit developments” (PUDs). What characterizes these developments is threefold: smaller individual lots with commonly owned open spaces and other facilities; detailed deed restrictions (the notorious CC&Rs—conditions, covenants, and restrictions); and developer-organized homeowner associations in which membership is mandatory.<sup>14</sup> In such developments, the commonly owned area can include traditionally public spaces like streets, parks, and parking lots, as well as conventionally private spaces like front lawns. Residents pay fees to maintain these facilities and “for private services that range from police protection to local self-government.” The rapid growth in this form of development is remarkable. In 1992, “there were 150,000 associations privately governing an estimated 32 million Americans”; up to 60 percent of all new housing in major metropolitan areas is in developments of this kind.<sup>15</sup>

There are two central points to be garnered from McKenzie’s astute analysis of these developments. First, the dominance of CID housing is a result of deliberate institutional policies. It is not the case that consumers demanded these private, controlled environments and then the market reacted to those demands. Rather, CIDs originated in response to land scarcity after the first swell of postwar suburban construction; common ownership plans were not utopian social experiments but simply a way to put more people on less space. Municipalities in financial difficulties welcomed the construction of private infrastructure, and both federal and local governments joined with real estate associations in creating policies and public relation campaigns to create a market for the “product,” since “CIDs departed significantly from what most middle-class families expected from home ownership.”<sup>16</sup>

The second crucial point is that these developments are, as McKenzie argues, undemocratic internally and externally (i.e., in their effect on the larger community). Homeowner associations are essentially private governments wielding the “quasi-constitution” of the CC&Rs, which can and do include restrictions of all kinds: color of houses and curtains, position of garage doors, appearance of lawns and exteriors, what kinds of cars and pets and visitors are permissible, where trash cans, signs, and laundry can be. Amending CC&Rs almost always requires a super-majority vote, and these restrictions are enforced through the courts, which have tended to rule in

favor of the homeowner association. Property values—not fairness, freedom, privacy, or diversity—is the ruling consideration. In an increasing number of American lives, then, what counts as civic virtue is maintaining property values, and what counts as social responsibility is paying homeowner association dues.<sup>17</sup>

Having met this version of social responsibility, residents of CIDs are increasingly likely to regard themselves as taxed twice. They pay through their homeowner dues for the provision of private services, and then again through city or county taxes for public services that they do not regard themselves as utilizing or for solving problems that they do not recognize as their own. Suburbs already involve a “secession of the successful,” in Robert Reich’s phrase, with the attendant withdrawal of tax revenue from cities; CIDs further attenuate the commitment to the larger metropolitan community.<sup>18</sup>

The flip side of middle-class gated communities and CIDs are, of course, ghettos—peopled not by “high resource choice makers” but by “low resource choice takers.”<sup>19</sup> Like CID housing, ghettos are not the result of “impersonal market forces” that respond to the desire of the races to live among “their own kind.” Rather, survey work suggests that while African Americans would prefer to live in racially mixed areas, whites continue to have a very low tolerance for the residential presence of African Americans.<sup>20</sup> The construction of black ghettos in the city and the continuation of residential segregation in the suburbs result partly from private racist attitudes and behaviors, but these behaviors have been and continue to be supported by institutional practices and policies. Examples range from the standards of risk and neighborhood stability that inform loan assessment to the limited enforcement authority of the 1968 Fair Housing Act.<sup>21</sup>

Massey and Denton’s measurements demonstrate that about one-third of African Americans live under conditions of “hypersegregation”—conditions of extreme spatial isolation that make it very unlikely that they would have encounters with whites in the course of everyday life.<sup>22</sup> In fact, ghetto neighborhoods may have their own “gates,” through the construction of police-designated “no-go” zones that restrict access and regulate circulation in an attempt to combat drug traffic and gang violence. “For public-housing tenants and inhabitants of narcotic-enforcement zones, the loss of freedom is the price of ‘security.’”<sup>23</sup> The material construction of the ghetto shapes political possibility in a very direct way, for this residential isolation has precluded the emergence of cross-racial political coalitions.

When a library, firehouse, police station, or school was built in a black neighborhood, other ethnic groups derived few, if any, benefits; and when important services were

threatened with reduction or removal, blacks could find few coalition partners with whom to protest the cuts.<sup>24</sup>

“Gates” take a variety of forms, then: from an impenetrable wall to a simple mechanical arm, from barbed wire surrounding a housing project to red lines on a city map. Viewed from different angles, these gates have different social meanings. A gate that indicates safety and security to a resident of a middle-class development can communicate “danger—keep out” to residents of the poor neighborhood it borders. (A gate may have more than one meaning even for the same person; a tall wire fence may feel both protective and entrapping.) Most significantly, gates construct and manifest social relations—in this case, segregation.<sup>25</sup> I use *segregation* intentionally, for it seems to me to capture the relational quality of gates in a way that *exclusion* does not; these kinds of gates function not just to keep some people out, but to keep people on each side separate from one another—or, to put it paradoxically, to actively construct relations of separation.

The active quality of segregation is perhaps most clearly revealed when practiced in the mode of colonization. In older cities, condominiums are a common form of gentrification, the “conversion of economically marginal and working class areas to middle class residential use.”<sup>26</sup> Those who buy in gentrified areas at least have an affection for and commitment to the city, but their experience of the city is often a strangely purified one. Gentrified areas are characterized by “boutique retailing, elite consumption, and upscale housing”; poor and working-class residents are displaced as rents go up and low-income housing is destroyed or converted.<sup>27</sup>

The gentrification processes that purge neighborhoods and exacerbate housing problems also create incentives to keep the streets feeling safe for middle-class residents and clear of “disturbances” that might deter suburbanites and tourists from frequenting the city’s cultural and commercial attractions. Safety, as Garreau says, is “the city-shaping category.” Both old downtowns that have been “revitalized” and new edge cities display the qualities of increasingly policed versions of public space. Shopping malls are patrolled by private security forces, and some also have police substations in them.<sup>28</sup> The space in malls and renovated downtown shopping complexes is policed in part by asserting an unambiguous and singular function: consumption. The policing of function is a way of determining what kind of public is present. And those who fit security guards’ stereotypes of nonconsumers or troublemakers (like black and Latino teenagers and elderly women of all races) are made to feel distinctly unwelcome.<sup>29</sup>

In the malls and on the streets, the presence of policing forces is enhanced through technological means: simple video camera surveillance, sophisti-

cated communications systems, even helicopter fleets with fancy sensor equipment.<sup>30</sup> The built environment of urban space is designed to be amenable to this surveillance and to support its purpose of segregation. Flusty identifies a variety of “interdictory spaces,” like space hidden by design, space visible but impossible to get to and from certain directions, space ostentatiously bristling with walls and gates. There is also “prickly” space, designed to be uncomfortable to occupy, particularly by the homeless. Its components include sprinkler systems, lack of protection from sun or shade, an absence of public toilets or water, “bag-lady proof” enclosures around restaurant dumpsters, and “bum-proof benches” on which it is impossible to lie down.<sup>31</sup>

### *III. THE PRIVATE AND THE PUBLIC*

The constructions detailed in the previous section exhibit distinctly antipolitical impulses toward exclusion, control, security, sameness, and predictability—yet often under the guise of public space. One is tempted to say that what these phenomena share is that they are material and architectural constructions that obscure the presence of differences and inequality in the polity and create a tamed and prettified version of public space. But to put it that way is to inhabit the perspective that these practices take, and create, as normative. Who experiences it as tame? From whom is the presence of difference obscured? It is crucial to note that there is a distinct “public” in mind here and that these constructions embody its ascribed perspective and indeed are designed to obscure that the public has been reduced to a singular perspective.<sup>32</sup>

Let us analyze these practices from the perspectives of the multiple publics that coexist in our inegalitarian and diverse social order.<sup>33</sup> Building these spaces is an attempt to root out from the lived experience of the privileged both multiplicity and its attendant uncontrollability. The practices affect other “publics” differently, and they also operate to animate and entrench particular relations between publics, to shape citizens’ experiences of one another. Specifically, these environments function to establish and secure relations of threat. If the consuming white middle-class public comes to feel at risk in the presence of those who do not look or act like them, then purifying public space of risk for them means increasing danger, discomfort, or outright exclusion for those typed as alien or unknown. Renovated center city shopping complexes designed to feel safe to middle-class white suburbanites<sup>34</sup> are often perilous for others—African Americans who risk being

accused of shoplifting or otherwise hassled by security guards, homeless people who suffer the same suspicions and are driven off benches and out of public toilets. The presence of the police, in either public or private manifestations, signals safety for some and danger for others.<sup>35</sup>

To the extent that they are successful, these purging techniques operate to screen and partition in a fairly thorough way some citizens from others. Often, then, the primary experience of “others” is through media stereotypes. The meaning and experience of “being in public” changes quite significantly in such a context. We are no longer moving with and negotiating around diverse strangers in a shared material world, but rather within a certain kind of bounded space that determines who and what we perceive. And who we “happen” to see regularly as we move through the world has an influence on who we think of as citizens and who we think to engage with as citizens—in other words, whose perspectives must be taken into account when making political decisions. Thus, we endanger the possibility of democratic politics when we settle in these enclosures, particularly when we become so accustomed to the walls that we forget they are there, for then we begin to imagine that “the world” consists only of those inside our gates.

This “forgetting” is of course only possible for the privileged; it is not as though minority groups can ever block out the dominant culture.<sup>36</sup> And those without socioeconomic resources have much less power to build up the world in a way that secures feelings of safety and much less protection from threatening other. The freedom and security of some people is increasingly encroached upon as others attempt to secure it for themselves. But the shared danger is this: what we all risk losing in building up the worldly artifice in this way is the possibility of a democratic public realm, one that depends on the presence of a multiplicity of perceiving and perceived others. When citizens (on either side of the gates) are daily and thoroughly separated from those who are “different” from them (in terms of race or class, homelessness or joblessness), it requires an inhuman amount of imagination to have a genuinely democratic public.<sup>37</sup>

The issue of policed and segregated public space may seem separable from the issue of controlled residential space. While the character of public space is clearly a matter for public concern, is the character of residential choices—however much we may disapprove of another’s choice—a private matter? Infringing on the right to choose where and among whom one lives would seem, in the American cultural context anyway, an unbearable imposition on privacy and freedom. To examine the issue of residential choice as a private matter is to consider two dimensions of “privacy-related liberty”—as a right to limit access and exclude others and as a right to decisional auton-

omy.<sup>38</sup> But such privacy claims must be scrutinized in light of their public meaning and effects. As feminists have argued, power is exercised in the very demarcation of public and private, and it is also reflected in the different senses of public and private realms that different groups have. The putatively private realm of the home often affords less privacy to women than to men, and increasingly, privacy is “a virtual commodity purchased by the middle class and the well-to-do,” one not available to the economically disadvantaged, those in public institutions, and the homeless.<sup>39</sup> And the sense of the domestic realm as private has historically not been true for African Americans, not only as a result of the practices of slavery but because of the prevalence of black women’s employment as domestics, where “the home” was the public place of employment.<sup>40</sup>

This is not to say that the notion of privacy is simply a screen for oppression and should be rejected, but rather that it is a “politically constructed and contested good” with varying and multifaceted roles.<sup>41</sup> If we recognize the multifaceted roles that privacy plays in social life, and the underlying and potential linkages between private and public, then we can begin to articulate a different perspective on the “private home” and its political ramifications. Home is idealized as a place of nurturance and safety, of comfort and shared interests, a retreat from publicness or from the clash of the political.<sup>42</sup> This ideology of home can work to mask conflicts and inequality within that space, as well as the fact that such a home is unavailable to many. But further, as Honig’s insightful analysis of the “dream of home” makes clear, the idealized notion of home has dangerous effects as an ideal.

The phantasmatic imaginary of home (as safe haven in a heartless world) leaks into the politics of its bearers, animating a longing for a more homelike, (would-be) womblike universe, unriven by difference, conflicts, or dilemmas, a well-ordered and welcoming place.<sup>43</sup>

Attempts to satisfy the desire for security and safety can simply intensify the longing; the more homogeneity among those lived with, the more threatening are any indications of difference that manage to creep in (through television, the news, visitors, etc.).<sup>44</sup> Thus, I suggest that it is not simply a phantasmatic imaginary that feeds the longing for the idealized home and produces its political consequences, but the practices of residential and public construction detailed above. The material artifice created by these practices of city-building is conditioning us all in ways that have unhappy consequences for democratic politics. What theoretical lens helps us explain why a controlled environment is so longed for that to gain it huge numbers of Americans are willing to give sovereign control to CC&Rs devised by developers?

Why are city spaces increasingly “variations on a theme park”<sup>45</sup> or a shopping mall?

#### IV. THEORIZING CHANGE

Various theoretical frameworks might be invoked in analyzing this pursuit of purity and the way in which social relations shape and are shaped by this pursuit, but a popular candidate seems to be a psychoanalytic approach. Sibley, for example, uses a combination of Kleinian object relations theory, Kristeva on the abject, and anthropological approaches to the taboo in order to outline what one might call the excrement model of human relations.<sup>46</sup> The purity of self-identity is pursued through an attempt to keep the clean separate from the dirty, to expel the impure, the abject. “The boundary between inner (pure) self and outer (defiled) self, which is initially manifest in a distaste for bodily residues . . . assumes a much wider cultural significance.” Groups of people becomes associated with the abject—with dirt, shit, disease—and cultural and physical boundaries are designed to keep the polluting other separated from the self.<sup>47</sup> Ambiguity about what is pure and impure creates anxiety and fear, so we are driven to push others into one category or another. Spatially, this is represented by “purified” suburbs outside the inner city and all kinds of gated and walled communities.<sup>48</sup>

Young also utilizes Kristeva’s theory of the abject, as a way to explain the unconscious aversion that affects public interaction between different groups (examples include blacks and whites, men and women, gays and straights). Bringing these habits, fears, and reactions to consciousness—opening them up for public discussion—is a central element in cultural change. Young suggests forms of “institutionalized consciousness-raising”<sup>49</sup> (rather than mass psychoanalysis).

This kind of consciousness raising and public discussion is crucial for social change. But while the theory of the abject certainly fits the phenomena of gated communities and policed downtowns, I am not sure it gets us anywhere that a more informal sense of the unconscious workings of racism does not get us, and it does not give us many ways to approach change beyond psychoanalysis or consciousness raising. Another strategy might be to engage in moral exhortation (as sometimes Sennett does) about the importance of being open to risk, loss of self, and lack of control. There is definitely a space for that kind of moral suasion in public discourse and private conversation, particularly among more privileged classes. But we need to be careful about demonizing fear as deeply undemocratic. A tempting argument here is to

claim that sometimes fear is justified—say, for women of all races and classes given the prevalence and diversity of violence against women, or for young black males given their rates of imprisonment. I do not make this argument, for the question of justification is extremely tricky; Aristotle notwithstanding, there is no one way to judge when it is appropriate to feel fear.<sup>50</sup> Nor is it clear what actions certain fears might justify. Sometimes (as I have argued elsewhere) democratic politics requires citizens to act in certain ways in spite of fear and risk, and a political ethic of courage might help to revitalize democratic politics in an inequalitarian society.<sup>51</sup> But surely public life cannot require of us that we never act on our fears. How do I know when to act against or in spite of my fears, and how do I know when my fear is discerning in a way that should guide my actions? These are challenging and disturbing judgments to make, and part of the uncertainty that enclosed spaces help us avoid is the uncertainty of how to act with respect to a disturbing stranger.<sup>52</sup>

So although there is certainly room to call for courage as a way to deal with segregation in urban and suburban life,<sup>53</sup> to focus only on individual fear and the necessity of overcoming it is to engender guilt, resentment, and exhaustion. More significantly, casting the solution in terms of individual risk taking and responsibility ignores the more structural means by which fear (of others) and desire (for privacy and safety) is produced and propagated. To locate the deformation of democratic citizenship solely in the conscious choices or unconscious desires of the white middle class is to assume that the built environment is a kind of automatic effect of the aversive desires of those subjects. But space and society are more interactive than that, more mutually constitutive. The spatial relations built into modern life cannot be thought of as primarily a reflection of desired social relations, for they also produce and form those relations.<sup>54</sup> Thus, it is important to look at the conditions under which choices are made and desires felt, the conditions that influence how it is possible—even how it “makes sense”—to think and act. By “conditions” I mean more than the social and ideological structures of race and gender. As Elkin and others have argued, *institutions* govern and structure how citizens experience each other and (I would add) how they experience the built environment.<sup>55</sup> Beyond a psychoanalytic approach to contemporary “boundary” issues, then, I suggest a political institutional one. In addition to consciousness raising and moral suasion, we might approach change by looking at the decision-making institutions that permit and encourage undemocratic building practices.

This approach can be gleaned from recent works exploring how jurisdictional boundaries structure urban citizenship, in particular the effects of “fragmented institutions.” The concern here is the “peculiar governmental

fertility” of the United States: the ability of communities to incorporate, create local governing structures, and operate independently of neighboring municipalities.<sup>56</sup> The proliferation of local institutions is usually seen (since Tocqueville, anyway) as a gain for democracy. And within cities, arguments for decentralization and neighborhood control are usually made in terms of increased democracy.<sup>57</sup> But, as Young has argued, decentralization is not the same as democratization; decentralization stresses autonomy, the ability to act without constraint or without attending to others.<sup>58</sup> Creating local government is often “a sign that [citizens] wish to blunt, deflect, and isolate themselves from democratic processes.”<sup>59</sup> There is also evidence that decentralization increases racial inequality and segregation.<sup>60</sup> Thus, it can work against the grain of democratic public life understood as “outside,” in the presence of numerous others and with limits to individual control (see Section I).

Some studies argue that decentralization does in fact work against democratic participation and imagination. In their comparative study of a consolidated (city/county) metropolitan jurisdiction and a metropolitan area characterized by multiple “empowered localities,” Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog found that the empowered localities induced a reliance on “exit” as the predominant mode of problem solving, while the consolidated institutions prompted active efforts to change problematic conditions, or at least regime-supportive loyalty. Interestingly, citizens in the consolidated jurisdiction were more psychologically attached to their cities than those in the other areas.<sup>61</sup>

This “metropolitanist critique” suggests that democracy might better be served by regional decision making, an argument also made by Young. Young suggests that municipalities and neighborhood assemblies can be empowered (have an active voice in decision making) without having sovereign authority. Their purpose would be “to determine local priorities and policy opinions which their representatives should voice and defend in regional assemblies.”<sup>62</sup> Democratized regional decision making would prevent capital from playing municipalities against one another and also would prevent wealthy areas from keeping all their resources for themselves. Decisions about investment and development would have to be matters for public, rather than corporate, decision making. As Young says,

In democratized regional planning many disagreements and conflicts would often no doubt occur among diverse sectors, groups, and interests. . . . But it is unlikely that when a region already has five huge shopping malls, a democratic public would decide to construct another right across the highway from one of them, with the primary purpose of drawing business away from it.<sup>63</sup>

It does not seem overly optimistic to assume that a regional democratic public could also come up with more imaginative ways of meeting housing needs than constructing cookie-cutter developments with restrictive covenants and prohibitive prices. Such a public, since it would be inclusive of people all over the metropolitan region, would develop a more diverse sense of what in fact "housing needs" are. (Note that I do not say a consensus, since opinions and interests would undoubtedly still conflict.)

Although democratic theorists sometimes assume that the issues that matter most to people are neighborhood issues, in contemporary life concerns are not so easily spatially located and may be spread out across a region, including where we work and play as well as where we live. Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog's work suggests that citizens are indeed capable of an attachment to and concern with the "outside" beyond lifestyle enclaves.<sup>64</sup> Rewriting political jurisdictional boundaries could have far-reaching effects, in terms of who people think of as sharing public space with them and thus who counts as fellow citizens, as equal voices in decision making with equally legitimate claims on the resources of the polity. This approach suggests that, paradoxically, multiplicity is best served by consolidated institutions, which nourish a concern for an outside shared with strangers and empower citizens to act on those concerns.

Still, as Weiher puts it, the *residential* space "is precisely the context in which people are least able to tolerate diversity."<sup>65</sup> In thinking about how boundaries shape consciousness and action, Weiher asks how suburban populations come to be homogeneous in terms of race and class. One part of the answer is overt exclusionary practices (e.g., on the part of real estate agents) and the lack of provision of housing and services (e.g., public transportation) for lower-income people. But what operates to "recruit" certain kinds of settlers (to use Weiher's language)—why do very similar kinds of people move into certain suburbs? Weiher locates the answer in the placement of political boundaries, which serve as primary sources of information in communicating distinct place identities. Such boundaries are precise and authoritative markings that are much more salient for location decisions than are more informally distinguished neighborhoods. The most significant political boundaries for would-be residents are those of the municipality and the school district. When these boundaries coincide—that is, when a school district and a town have identical boundaries, as in many suburbs—there is more likely to be an extremely homogeneous population.<sup>66</sup> When a school district overlaps different municipalities, or when a municipality includes more than one school district, the area is more heterogeneous—place identity is less distinct, and a variety of people are "recruited."<sup>67</sup>

Rather than possessing a singular distinct identity, then, urban and suburban spaces should be fuzzy and multilayered; Weiher's work suggests that cross-cutting political boundaries can help to foster this heterogeneity and complexity. "Overlapping" is important in other ways as well. Jane Jacobs has long argued for mixed-use space as central to city life, rather than segregating residential and commercial spaces from one another or creating "border vacuums." As Young says bluntly, the separation of functions makes city life "more boring, meaningless, and dangerous."<sup>68</sup> (And single-function space, as noted earlier, makes it possible to police and segregate publics more thoroughly.) Overlapping helps to form "complex, open borders"; it is with these "overlays of difference" that the "power of simultaneous perception is aroused."<sup>69</sup>

Let us reconsider from this perspective the "common interest developments" so dominant in the real estate market now. Their developers attempt to create a distinct (though not particularly deep) place identity; they may not be quite as authoritative as political boundaries, but they are much less fuzzy and permeable than older neighborhoods. CIDs and gated communities purposely design "border vacuums" to ensure seclusion and control. The analysis above would suggest that such development should be constrained—for the sake of democratic public life.

Certainly this would mean infringing on some people's ability to choose to live in a privately, precisely controlled environment. But when some people's pursuit of a purified notion of privacy has significant impact on others and on the public realm, it is surely a matter of concern for a democratic public.<sup>70</sup> What this means is that there is only so much privacy and privacy-related liberty that citizens can claim. It does not mean that privacy is not a legitimate and meaningful good; I find persuasive Arendt's and Sennett's view that publicness is endurable and enjoyable only when there is some version of a private to retreat to. And there is of course no singular democratic personality; we all have different tolerances for different forms of privacy and publicity.<sup>71</sup> But, as Honig says, the need for spaces of nurturance and withdrawal "does not settle the question of how we ought to conceive of them." She offers the possibility of a "resignification" of home that does not rest on purging conflict and difference, while acknowledging that such a resignification does "admit and embrace a vulnerability that may *look like* homelessness" from certain perspectives. Pursuing this possibility thus "depends on the ability to resist the forces that imbue us with an often overwhelming desire to go home."<sup>72</sup>

I am suggesting that both this resistance and this desire are tightly linked to the options that political institutions allow, encourage, or prevent. From this perspective, more can be done than asking individuals to resist culturally

encouraged and institutionally supported choices; making change on the institutional level is a way to alter the context in which desires are formed and pursued and decisions made. I do not claim that this approach neatly resolves the complex problems that cultural and economic inequality pose for a democratic polity. But I do propose it, rather urgently, as a terrain of inquiry for political theorists in which many normative and pragmatic questions remain to be probed.<sup>73</sup>

Democratic theorists might well be uneasy that a political institutional approach raises the specter of "legislating desires." Of course, the desires that we already have are in a sense "legislated," not natural or neutral; there is no sovereign self independent of these influences. But this does not settle the question of the moral weight of the experience of selfhood. Whether one believes that subjectivity is an effect of power or that as political selves we have an existence independent of our "ends and attachments," the point remains that most citizens experience themselves as selves, relatively autonomous but not wholly unconstrained.<sup>74</sup> Even recognizing that my desires are shaped by institutional configurations (among other things) may not make those desires feel any less "mine." Democratically speaking (i.e., putting aside Platonic visions of wiping the slate clean), what role should recognition of the experienced authenticity of desire play in theorizing about social change?

Clearly, if institutional change is not to be a nondemocratic version of social engineering, it has to be the result of democratic processes and public contestation. In this culture, most of us are already socialized to acknowledge that not all desires should be acted on. Might this provide a conceptual opening for public talk not simply about choice and privacy but about the kinds of desires and feelings a democratic polity should support institutionally? What problems lurk and what possibilities live in this potential communicative interaction about democratic desires?

Political institutions already shape the "outside" and the possibility of living together in it. My stance throughout this essay has been that literally bringing people together in a variety of ways through their daily experience makes a difference in how they think politically—not in terms of the content of opinions, but in terms of the awareness of different perspectives that must be taken into account in forming opinions. I admit that it is difficult to know how profound or exactly what type of difference this makes. But at a minimum, this "outside togetherness" makes possible the recognition of others as presences in the polity. And this is an important minimum, for as dangerous as hatred or revulsion is the willful ignorance of other people's lives and of one's own effect on those lives, the ability to "zone out" those existences different from one's own or from media stereotypes.<sup>75</sup> This zoning out is often

evident in how we use language about our cities—"no one lives there" or "there's nothing there" or "no one goes there at night" or (as a college friend of mine once said, to her immediate chagrin), "Oh, everyone in Pittsburgh goes to private schools."<sup>76</sup>

I do not claim that the alternative to zoning out is some deep connection that automatically dissolves stereotypes and conquers revulsion.<sup>77</sup> But we ought to explore the possibility that just as the construction of social space makes certain interactions rare, so can it create and foster better interactions—ones better for a democratic polity. The encounter with strangers involves something between indifferent detachment on one hand and intimate comfort on the other; Sennett, for example, invokes Arendt in articulating "warm impersonality" as a fitting form of public involvement. As Arendt readers will recall, she was critical of basing public involvement on feelings of sympathy, love, and compassion; she offered instead the principle of solidarity.<sup>78</sup> But we need not follow Arendt's strict division between solidarity and sympathy, between principle and feeling, to examine how the built environment can cultivate or eradicate that specific stranger-like recognition that is central to the possibility of democratic politics in a diverse and unequal polity.

### NOTES

1. Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1990), xiii.

2. This claim is a little sweeping and is bound to generate counterexamples. Some of these counterexamples—Iris Marion Young, Stephen L. Elkin—play a role in my analysis below. See also George M. Shulman, "The Myth of Cain: Fratricide, City Building, and Politics," *Political Theory* 14, no. 2 (1986): 215-38, in which multiple readings of the biblical story of Cain are used to sketch possibilities for understanding and undertaking urban creation.

3. Although I cannot provide a full-fledged argument for it here, an underlying goal of this project is to encourage a radical democratic focus on political institutions as one arena of change. I recognize that this suggestion may be controversial, both because interest in cultural politics arose out of dissatisfaction with narrow political institutional analyses and because there is disagreement about the consequences of working for social change through state institutions. For further discussion, see Susan Bickford, "Reconfiguring Pluralism: Identity and Institutions in the Inegalitarian Polity," *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 1 (1999): 86-108.

4. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 30.

5. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, xiii.

6. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977), esp. pt. 4.

7. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 57. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that one of the foremost theorists of democracy and difference, Iris Young, poses "a normative ideal of city life" as a model of a heterogeneous public.

Ideally, "in the city persons and groups interact within spaces and institutions they all experience themselves as belonging to, but without those interactions dissolving into unity or commonness." The "unassimilated otherness," the variety of activities, the lure of the unexpected and different are all facets of Young's normative urban ideal. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 236-40.

8. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, 158.

9. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, chap. 5; Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, chap. 1.

10. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, xi-xiii). There is a third sense of exposure, as in "exposed as a fraud"—the revelation of wrongdoing, or of a mismatch between inner self and outer presentation. The idea that the public self is or should be a representation of the inner self is precisely what Sennett and Arendt are questioning.

11. Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, "Divided We Fall: Gated and Walled Communities in the United States," in *Architecture of Fear*, ed. Nan Ellin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997); Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Timothy Egan, "Many Seek Security in Private Communities," *New York Times*, September 5, 1995.

12. Blakely and Snyder, "Divided We Fall," 89-90.

13. Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 172-73; Peter Marcuse, "Walls of Fear and Walls of Support," in Ellin, *Architecture of Fear*.

14. McKenzie, *Privatopia*. As McKenzie notes, these housing developments are also often designed specifically to appeal to select homogeneous populations, for example, "singles" or "retirees" or "first-time buyers" (188-92).

15. McKenzie, *Privatopia*, 19-21, 11. The 60 percent figure is from the *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 12, 1997, 3E.

16. McKenzie, *Privatopia*, chaps. 3-5, esp. 80-84.

17. *Ibid.*, 12-18, 147, 146-49.

18. *Ibid.*, 186-89.

19. For these categories, see Gregory Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis: Political Fragmentation and Metropolitan Segregation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

20. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88-96.

21. Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*.

22. *Ibid.*, chap. 3. There is a vast literature on the social impact of ghettos and on their role in the formation of an underclass (e.g., the work of William Julius Wilson and his critics), which space prevents me from engaging here.

23. Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles," 166-67. Readers may also recall a case a few years ago in which police asked the courts for permission to search without warrants in a Chicago housing project, with the goal of reducing the volume of drugs and guns there. Not surprisingly, many of the residents were in favor of this violation of their constitutional rights.

24. Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 155.

25. See the examples in Marcuse, "Walls of Fear."

26. Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 180.

27. Neil Smith, "New City, New Frontier: The Lower East Side as Wild, Wild West," in Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park*. Consequently, Smith points out, "the homeless" are more accurately described as 'the evicted,' since people don't simply fall out of the housing market—they are usually pushed." The big winners in all this are not the middle-class condo residents, but the real estate speculators (91, 82-86).

28. Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 48, 50; Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles." "Mall cop" as a private occupation has achieved a level of visibility that political scientists can only envy; it is the occupation of the main character of a syndicated comic strip—*Drabble*. Drabble is a bumbling sort who rarely has to deal with anything more threatening than a fire in a trash can, which he puts out with chocolate milk.

29. On policing of function, see David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Caniglia notes that the elderly have a special dilemma: "A women talked about how they're careful to bring along the right number of bags on their trips downtown: enough to look as if they've been shopping, but not so many as to be branded bag ladies." Julie Caniglia, "Please Keep off the Grass: Downtown Minneapolis," *Minneapolis/St. Paul City Pages*, May 20, 1992, 10-15, at 15.

30. Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles"; Steven Flusty, "Building Paranoia," in Ellin, *Architecture of Fear*.

31. Flusty, "Building Paranoia"; Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles"; Caniglia, "Please Keep off the Grass."

32. As theorists of race and gender have noted, this is a familiar technique of systems of oppression: to obscure the partiality of certain perspectives and treat them as universal (i.e., gender or race neutral). See, for example, Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman* (Boston: Beacon, 1988).

33. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992) on the importance of theorizing the public sphere in terms of multiple publics.

34. I am not ignoring the existence of a black middle class, but rather accepting the well-documented phenomenon that even ostensible middle-class and professional status does not protect African Americans from racist assumptions. For example, Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage, 1994); Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

35. Teenagers occupy an odd space in this dynamic of purging: at once dependable sources of revenue and potential disruptions, both residents of private developments and possible vandals, belonging neither on the children's playground nor in a bar. (Garreau, *Edge City*, 50-51; Blakely and Snyder, "Divided We Fall," 92-93; Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, 34-35). That very unpredictability often makes their presence—especially in groups—feel threatening to adults.

36. Indeed, they often become sophisticated ethnographers of that culture; see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1991), chap. 1; bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End, 1992), chap. 11.

37. bell hooks's memory of growing up in a poor neighborhood shows the mutual relations of threat that segregation constructs: "Black folks associated whiteness with the terrible, the terrifying, the terrorizing. White people were regarded as terrorists, especially those who dared to enter the segregated space of blackness" (*Black Looks*, 170).

38. The articulation of the two dimensions of privacy and the concept of "privacy-related liberty" are Allen's. Anita L. Allen, "Privacy at Home: The Twofold Problem," in *Revisioning the Political*, ed. Nancy J. Hirschmann and Christine Di Stefano (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996). For other samples of feminist arguments about public and private, see Martha A. Ackelsberg and Mary Lyndon Shanley, "Privacy, Publicity, and Power: A Feminist Rethinking of the Public-Private Distinction," in *Revisioning the Political*, ed. Nancy J. Hirschmann and Christine Di Stefano (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996); Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989); and Catherine A.

MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

39. Allen, "Privacy at Home," 197-98.

40. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, chap. 3. Collins further notes a sense in which being "in private" meant being within the black community, and "public" was the realm in which one was among white people.

41. Ackelsberg and Shanley, "Privacy, Publicity, and Power," 213; Patricia Boling, *Privacy and the Politics of Intimate Life* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Jean L. Cohen, "Democracy, Difference, and the Right of Privacy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

42. Home can also be a model for a particular kind of political community, on the model of nationalism, where a certain homogeneity and commonality of interest are assumed. Particularly within feminism, criticisms of this model have led to theories and practices of "coalition" as an alternative to "home". The classic statement is Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century," in *Home Girls*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983); see also Lisa Albrecht and Rose M. Brewer, eds. *Bridges of Power: Women's Multicultural Alliances* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1990). Other theorists who examine the political import of literal and figurative notions of home include Lisa Disch, *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. chap. 6; Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to Do With It?" in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Melissa A. Orlie, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

43. Bonnie Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home," in Benhabib, *Democracy and Difference*, 272.

44. One indication of the insatiable desire for security is the escalating fear of crime among citizens overall, in a context in which the overall crime rate is actually holding steady or decreasing.

45. Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park*.

46. Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, chap. 1.

47. *Ibid.*, 7; compare Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), esp. 2-16.

48. Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, chap. 3.

49. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 152-55, chap. 5; also Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, 185-86.

50. For example, some analysts of hazardous waste siting have pointed out that state officials and citizens reason about risk very differently. State officials focus on *probability*, on the likelihood that an accident would happen at a waste storage facility, while local citizens tend to assess risk based on the *effect* an accident would have on them and on their community. Although in these debates citizens are accused of being narrowly parochial, it is hard to maintain the claim that one of these modes of risk assessment is more "rational" than the other. See Gregory E. McAvoy, *Controlling Technocracy: Citizen Rationality and the NIMBY Syndrome* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999).

51. Susan Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy: Listening, Conflict, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); see also Holloway Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship: Democratic Theory, Political Courage, and Activist Women," *Hypatia* 12, no. 4 (1997): 74-110.

52. Perhaps it is the unwillingness to endure this uncomfortable uncertainty—rather than full-fledged and specific fears—that drives the actions of many in the white middle class.

53. Although, see Smith's indictment of the role that the discourse of "brave urban pioneers" plays in gentrification. Smith, "New City, New Frontier."

54. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

55. Stephen L. Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

56. Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis*.

57. For example, Elkin, *City and Regime*, chap. 9; but see Richard Dagger, "Metropolis, Memory, and Citizenship," *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 4 (1981): 715-37.

58. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 250-51.

59. Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis*, 183-84.

60. W. E. Lyons, David Lowery, and Ruth Hoogland DeHoog, *The Politics of Dissatisfaction* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), chap. 7; David Rusk, *Cities without Suburbs*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995).

61. Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog, *The Politics of Dissatisfaction*, chap. 8.

62. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 252.

63. *Ibid.*, 253.

64. Lyons, Lowery, and DeHoog, *The Politics of Dissatisfaction*, 170-82. Many citizens have passionate political concerns that are not locally or regionally constrained (although they may have spatial aspects), for example, environmental or feminist issues.

65. Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis*, 36; see also Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations*, rev. ed. (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 40-43.

66. Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis*, chap. 2, 4). I use *homogeneous* and *heterogeneous* here in terms of race and class. Weiher prefers *eccentric*—people in a suburb may differ in a variety of ways but are eccentric (compared to the population at large) with respect to a particular characteristic.

67. Weiher, *The Fractured Metropolis*, chap. 5. Weiher notes that there are two patterns in areas with overlapping boundaries: sometimes the area as a whole is more heterogeneous, sometimes there are still black and white regions within the larger area (50-60, 146-47). So people of different races still may not live on the same street, but at least the financial resources of the community are shared, and with "strangers" who have an equal say in decision making about those resources.

68. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, chaps. 8, 12, 14; Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 246.

69. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, 202, 165-68.

70. Bowles and Gintis argue more forcefully that any "socially consequential use of power"—one which "substantially affects the lives of others"—should be a matter for democratic decision making rather than private choice. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), chap. 3.

71. I confess I am particularly partial to sitting alone in coffee shops, an image Sennett uses as indicative of the decline of genuinely public life. Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, esp. 205-18.

72. Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas," 269, 271.

73. Not the least of which (an anonymous reviewer points out) is how to adjudicate between the claims made for the democratic potential of both centralization and decentralization. Are there other institutional conditions or contextual features that need to be considered in conjunction with degree of centralization?

74. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), for an argument that subjectivity is an effect of power; see John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysi-

cal," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1985): 223-51, for the claim that political selves can be viewed as independent of their ends and attachments.

75. See Michael Peter Smith, *The City and Social Theory* (New York: St. Martin's, 1979), 154-57, for this marvelous dual meaning of "zone out."

76. These locutions designate certain lived spaces as "empty." See Gary McDonogh, "The Geography of Emptiness," in *The Cultural Meaning of Urban Space*, ed. Robert Rotenberg and Gary McDonogh (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1993), for a perceptive analysis of the variety of meanings that "emptiness" carries.

77. See also my previous argument that friendship and care are not appropriate models for political relations. Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy*.

78. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, 136-37; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1963), chap. 2.

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