Carleton University

**De-congesting City-zenship: Seeing the Green Political Economy of “New” and
“Old” Parkway Modernization in the National Capital Region**

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

Institute of Political Economy

by

Roger Picton

Ottawa, Ontario

**January 2003
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ABSTRACT

Set in the “history(y)city” of “parkway modernism,” this tale of the urban form seeks to de-congest city-zen voices, and re-think the “old” political economy of road congestion in the “new” City of Ottawa from an urban green political economy lens. By exploring the local contestation over the *Alta Vista Parkway*, and critically re-appropriating past planning practices, this thesis aims to locate spaces for talk and action as much as to understand the “arrested circulation” of road-discourse. Focusing on present and past deficiencies in the process, definition and discourse of parkway modernization, this thesis provides a critical re-thinking of technical rationality. It argues that to liberate their voices from the alienating grips of auto-domination, local residents must embrace festive, active and deliberative citizenship. The fragmentary moments of the *Alta Vista Parkway* debate show a glimmer of the possibility for imaginative modernisms embedded in the everyday material and discursive practice of active city-zenship.

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INTRODUCTION: SEEING THROUGH THE PICTURE WINDOW

As a young child growing up in suburban Winnipeg, I spent countless hours staring out the picture window of our family bungalow watching the comings and goings of our street. Such periods of dazed amazement may seem quite banal to the “big picture” of political economy, yet it shaped a way of seeing the tapestry of urban life. In retrospect, the frame of that picture window was much bigger than it seemed. The individual stories collected through its framed view yielded an epistemological formation for “thinking through” the materialist spaces of day-to-day urban experiences. Its fragmentary collection prepared a basis for understanding how individual stories mediate and are mediated by the complex interplay between people and place. Although not as liberated as my early attempts to come to grips with the roads that preoccupied me as a child, the “bigger picture” of this project is an attempt to work through the puzzle of road discourse that mediates urban commodity experiences—trips to work, school, the store, the mall, the theater, the park—as well as the significance of daily-life in the formation of identity, production, and space (Mahon, 1993).

This project is interested in what makes Ottawa tick, that is, how the “old” and the “new” of road discourse drive a built city-form that provides for the domination of civic life by the automobile. By also concerning itself with the person-in-those-places, this thesis combines the environmental and the social to ask how we can begin to understand the confluence between citizen and professional expertise converging on a specific “site of contestation?” While addressing what is happening in the present, this first question overlooks how the past has molded the political identities

accepted by the players in this act of transportation planning. The main question demands a second question with an eye on the past. This second question asks how the history of planning in Ottawa, and notably its hybridized Garden City shaped local places, affected citizen-identities as well as their understanding of political action? Leading my inquiry with these two questions, I seek a future orientation for imaginative civic life.

In trying to re-think the ontological underpinnings of the present, past and future of modern landscape formation, I will make three interrelated arguments. First, using the entry point of the street as a manifestation of modernity, I will argue that the weight of “technical rationality” has thrust forward a particular brand of modernity and has constrained imaginative cities, active “city-zenship,” and green futures. Second, the messy and often conflicting role played by citizens and planners in this story will serve to show how administrative practices attached to this “Parkway Modernization” screenplay simultaneously reinforce “good modern” identities that subdue political city-zenship while creating “new” identities that uplift resistance. Finally, this thesis will search out citizen voices within Ottawa’s “new” road discourse to show how such openings can unveil the techno-rationalism of this locale’s “histor(y)city” and provide a window for contestation to the Parkway Modernist urban form.

Perpetuating an “old” conflict (between planners and citizens, experts and residents) in a “new” city, the narrative of this thesis concerns itself with the proposed building of a “new” roadway in the southeast sector of the City of Ottawa and immerses itself in the interchange between local citizen groups and city

representatives. It will argue that the history and present of professional expertise has acted-out an enclosure of the “mole’s eye” view of citizen expertise. During consultations on the Alta Vista Parkway, the technical show of expertise performed an act of inclusion, but in practice, its ritual was used to allay public concerns and to display “reason.” Rather than illuminating, such performative practices further veil the restricted access of transportation planning. Still, despite these closings, when “city-zens” are allowed to speak out, or decide to act-out their displeasure in a local environment, they can voice an alternative modernity for the future.

Political economy, like environmental studies, has concerned itself with the meeting place of the local state and civil society and with the connections between the rational planning and Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) citizen movements. In literature on the “local,” much has gone into understanding the mechanics of the negotiation and compromise between the NIMBYist cranks and the modernist functionalists. More work has been done on the influence of power and capital on land allocation and its impact on local communities (Fainstein, 1992, 1994, 2000; Harvey, 1989, 1996). Attention has also been given to the rise, prominence and influence of “Global Cities” such as New York, Tokyo, Los Angeles, London, Singapore as centers of global finance, capital and control (Luke, 2001). Finally, attention has been paid to the role of “technopoles” as “economic growth engines” or as forms for “cultural representation” (Mosco, 1997). Yet within the existing literature little has been said of the second order “global cities,” such as Ottawa (Luke, 2001), or of the political significance of these localities (Mosco, 1997). More

importantly the reorganization of civic spaces in relation to urban governance and to these larger trends has been overlooked (Mosco, 1997).

It is the intersection between citizens¹ and experts and contending visions of city-life, set in the “high-tech” landscape, that I wish to continue to explore. Urban studies is well situated to orient this exploration since in the last decade it has accepted cultural studies and space as central to the study of city life (Zukin, 1992). By combining the emerging sensibilities of urban studies with political economy, a culturally-inspired urban political economy provides a more textured and subjective look at the urban. Looking through this glass, the interplay between residents and planners can be perceived as a struggle over the cultural and productive representation of identity steeped in the history of the built city form. Thus, the epistemological focus of this thesis draws on the enormous wealth of these traditions—especially urban political economy—to suggest that the polycentric challenge to industrialism offered by green political thought be added to further advance an understanding of the political significance of “new” symbolic and material civic spaces, including the high-tech spaces of “global cities.”

As an inclusive, non-essentialist approach the story of Parkway Modernization presented hereafter crosses stringent disciplinary boundaries.² In rejecting meta-narratives and exploring the intersection between urban political economy and green political thought, this thesis follows Berman (1982, 1999), Capra (1982), Magnusson

¹ The spellings citizen and city-zen are used throughout the text. The conventional spelling is used to explain historical events and to refer to the geographic location of residents. “City-zen” is used to contrast and complement citizen by highlighting the possibility for a progressive politics and social learning during the act participation. It is used especially to mark action and imagination on the part of citizens.

² Mosco argues this process “involves critical reflection both on what has been accomplished and how it may be reconstituted i.e. restating, resynthesizing, rethinking and thereby renewing” (1996:4).

(1996) and Jacobs (2001) in accepting that a reductionist and essentialist modernity has dislocated the sensual and cultural and forgotten celebration in life. For the purposes of the case study, the boundary is loosely rooted in the imaginary of the street as a vessel for all that is or was urban modernity. It is in this place that the epistemological foundations of this thesis meet its ontological orientations: the inclusive narrative (the discursive) finds its story in the physical space of the street (the material).

To arrive at this point, this story inspires its methodology from critical theory. In particular it draws on Benjamin's "fragmentary historiography" to identify "moments of rupture, displacement, and dislocation in history" (D'Entrèves, 1994: 4). It accepts that through a critical reappropriation of the past "we discover the past anew, endow it with relevance and meaning for the present, and make it a source of inspiration for the future" (D'Entrèves, 1994:4). By looking at the past, present and future of parkway building in Ottawa, with the support of urban political economy, green political thought and critical theory, this thesis seeks out the "forgotten treasures" of modernity (Arendt, 1968) and slides open the window for a shouting out in the street.

Seeing the city's symbolic, material, and imaginary spaces through the gaze of the planning narrative, this thesis wanders through the geo-historical spaces of the city to underline an existing narrow urban modernity. The street acts as the primary entry point into this political economy of road discourse, as the nexus of "where" the "mutually constituted" processes of production, distribution, and consumption of resources (Mosco, 1996) meet the daily-*oikos* of household management. At the

centre of such a political economy is not the “thing” in itself but rather the surrounding “process” of systemic transformations embedded in the space of organic social relations. Accepting the green concern with interconnectedness of phenomena, and critical theory’s concern with the techno-zation of life, this non-essentialist epistemology highlights the street as the place where symbolic, material, and imaginary manifestations of civic life are set into concrete.

Set in the place of the City of Ottawa, this story follows the argumentative construction of road congestion through the ghosts of the past and the present to recapture moments that exemplify all that is ecologically problematic with current planning practices. At its core, I will re-visit the historical and ontological underpinnings of local landscape formation to argue that the “picture window” onto local spaces has been influenced by a particular brand of Parkway Modernization.

Chapter one begins by arguing that within urban administrative practices, the enlightenment’s imaginative spirit has been limited to a one-way obsession with building better, faster, picturesque, ordered and mostly mechanistic roadways. It is in the street that the ontological contrast between the green (inclusive –dynamic vibrancy) and mechanical (essentialist – ordered sterility) visions of modernity manifest themselves, thus providing a framework for looking through the self-reflection of identity in social space formation and, specifically, how identities play into road-building exercises.

In this investigation, the juxtaposed concepts of “technical rationality” and “cultural rationality” borrowed from green political thought, risk communication and critical theory act as key interlocutors in the debate over the collective futures of

cities. In this frame, technical rationality refers to the combination of scientific practices and knowledges applied by experts to legitimize decisions. Based on due-process and relying on quantitative measurement this way of seeing believes strongly that the cause-effect analysis provide an un-obscured view of problem/solution frameworks. In this vein, technical rationality takes socio-spatial planning as a series of linear, graphed and matrixed causal relations. While its ideal type counterpart designs itself as an exclusive realm of specialized knowledge, cultural rationality accepts the personal and the familiar as a legitimate way of understanding social-relations. It puts a primacy on the “lay”³ view to inform and celebrate the messy interconnectedness of mutually constituted processes. This juxtaposition highlights the limits of the administrative mind and reveals *who* and *what* are left out of the equation, as well as what ideology is being promoted as part of the calculated rationality.

Having presented an eclectic tableau of non-essentialist theoretical challenges to administrative rationality, the next chapter turns to the history of rational planning in the National Capital Region. Beginning with the historical backdrop to Ottawa’s ever-expanding circulation, the second chapter highlights the histor(y)city of Ottawa’s Garden City motif. Concentrating on the National Capital Commission’s 1950 Master Plan, it shows the planning initiative to be a bio-mechanical hybrid of mechanical modernism and romantic symbolism built in and around roadways as the motor’s circulatory system. In theorizing the manifestation of the ideological

³ Thanks to Al Vachon for pointing out that “lay” is often used to diminish and set apart the “people” from the chosen “priests” of techno-language. Here and elsewhere, this contrast is applied deliberately to provide a window into the false de-valuation of non-scientific expertise. This use is not meant to de-value lay knowledge but rather to highlight its exclusion.

histor(y)city, it asks how these material conditions constructed ideal type citizen-identities that continue to shape political action. A full complement of contradictions within the “good natured” citizenship, hints at the complex and fragmented identities involved in the proposal and rejection of new transportation projects. Thinking through the locale of the street, and the *modus operandi* of de-politicized technocratic planning, this chapter situates the Alta Vista Parkway (AVP) as part of a specific yet generalized historical lineage.

From the larger theoretical questions presented in chapter one and the histor(y)city presented in chapter two, the third chapter situates the AVP as an artery of the National Capital Commission’s inspired circulatory system, and as part of an discursive endeavour. The AVP is examined as a concrete manifestation of planning practices and an extension of the ideal-type commissioned in the 1950 Master Plan. This content chronicles the thrust of planning truths evoked as part of the rational road-building exercise. It demonstrates how road-building strategies appropriate the ownership of debate as the exclusive domain of econo-mechanistic thinking. While telling story of urban spaces, it moves from the textual and discursive foundations of road-congestion to develop an account of the way in which modernity and transportation shape the “new” and “old” City of Ottawa.

If — as this thesis will argue — conventional planning has proven itself to be restrictive and unable to meet the challenges of post-industrialism, what agency do city-zens have to un-clog the impasse? How do they propose to break-free from the restrictive techniques of administrative rationality? Set against and within this

historical landscape, the future orientation of this thesis concerns itself with how city-zens can locate “new” openings for imaginative civic-life.

Chapter four focuses on econo-mechanistic rationality as a driving force behind unsustainable road-oriented growth. It elucidates the conflict between cultural and technical rationality and the subtle ways identities are played out in the role play of environmental assessments. The final chapter wants to re-think the meeting place between citizens and experts and to re-script the performance of expertise. Informed first by the citizen contestations, and second by past examples of the horror of complete knowledge, this chapter hints at local knowledge and celebration as a limited source of green, counter-imaginary urban politics. It opens the window onto the street a little wider by providing a grounding for progressive local politics — an underpinning motivation that political economy has not abandoned.

Clement (1997) and Watkins (1997) have advised political economists to look beyond the disciplinary limits to “define politics broadly” (Watkins) and to understand the “totality” (Clement) of social life set within material conditions. Green political thought leads ardently into this endeavour with a holistic approach to understanding the interconnected “economic, political and cultural/ideological moments of social life” (Clement, 1997: 5). Leaning on the wisdom of Clement, Watkins and Mahon, and in the spirit of Warren Magnusson and Walter Benjamin, this “thinking through” of the histor(y)city of road discourse challenges the expansive contextualization of political economy’s “old” and “new” to include green decongestants as part of its endeavour to “reveal the political agendas of economic practices and asserts the importance of the social” (Clement, 1997: 5). Following their

lead, this thesis aims to un-clog one-way discourse and to liberate communicative social relations.

In viewing the bio-physical of Ottawa's Parkway Modernization from this lens, seeing the public imagination of citizens and urban functionaries, restating the intimate relations between the communities and the municipal governments involved in the road expansion debate, and by reevaluating the levers and nodal points between and within the social actors, a green political economy of the urban beyond instrumentalist planning begins to take shape. This definition of political economy pinpoints and elucidates the conflicts, tensions and discourse present in a debate involving complex social power relations leveled on the set auto-landscape of spatially-oriented municipal politics. It applies a decongestant to "arrested circulation" through holistic interpretations of contemplation and living around or as part of the street rather than off, beside, or even apart from the street. Perhaps when festive and deliberative city-zenship shouts out towards the street the puzzle of local progressive politics begins to re-shape itself and the space for political action is opened-up.

CHAPTER 1 – PUZZLING THROUGH THE POLITICAL SPACES OF THE STREET

A. Street Visions

Dancing Through the Street

“It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. This order is all but composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city, and liken it to a dance – not to a simple-minded precision dance with everybody kicking up at the same time, twirling unison and bowling off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole.”

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1963 (50)

The street represents the life of the city, the point of contact between citizens; it is the medium from which its ghosts are echoed and its living speak. Its landscape shapes and reshapes the lives of the citizen, setting the pace of their movements from locale to locale all the while mediating citizen interaction between neighbours, family, co-workers, and merchants. Indeed the rich and vibrant history of the street is particular to the city; its physicality has defined and redefined the meaning of space for the urbanite. Throughout the history of capitalism, the street has acted as a speed governor directing production and guiding consumption while similarly generating a multiplicity of private and public spaces under and over that which segregation is forged, ideology is propagated, artistry blossoms, and mischief is conducted. On its macadamed, cobbled and paved intersection of people and places, identity and social production have struggled to define the city landscape. In the mixed personal/public space of the street, the interplay between the concrete of capital and the legs of labour, the embodiments of modern productivism have met, collided and re-arranged

themselves. In its forms and functions both complex and simple, the street has allowed for resistance and compliance to modernization and to its processes of centralized political power, capital formation, and labour productivity (Jacobs et al., 2001; Habermas, 1992). The bundled process of sociality intertwined in these “nested locales” has been at the forefront for communicating the identities and productive functions, from emerging to late capitalisms. This cordons of urban space acts, and has acted, as a distinct point in which key moments of the micro and macro, the self, and the other can be identified to provide a picture of the generation and re-generation of dynamic social processes. Thus, the picture of the diverse and lively street provides the symbol for complex, chaotic, and interactive urban life.

A living street thrives on the sensate colours of life, the rumble of merchandise, the tumble of feet, the shouts of children, and the voice of the collected voyeur. This complex and co-existent vision of urban life is mirrored in the lived experience of the self-reflexive citizens moving through the city street at a human-scaled pace, thinking through their space in a constant interaction with that environment. The citizen-*flaneur* has been invoked — perhaps most famously by Walter Benjamin — by thinkers of the city as a metaphor for city-zenship based in the sensual. As a voyeur-drifter who thrives on the imaginative spirit of reverie, the *flaneur* meets the discursive in the concrete spaces of the street. The *flaneur* indulges in the relationship between public spaces and city-zenship, and in the meaning of city life in the specificity of placeness — such as the street. As a counter-aesthetic to the hyper-functionality of mechanical modernity, it remembers the city’s importance as a place, a home for city-zenship and participation, for lived experience as well as

planned exercise, and for imaginative possibilities. This experience is lived where knowledge of the self and the city is impressive and city-zenship and space feed off one another. Nowhere is this lived experience more rooted than in that locality of urban exchanges, where the senses meet action: the street

The metaphor of a flowing city-zen-*flaneur* applies Plough and Krinsky's (1987) conceptualization of "cultural rationality" in which the "personal and familiar experience is valued over depersonalized calculations" (Fisher, 1995). Cultural rationality directs the attention of city planning away from an ordered, linear rationality to a multi-directional approach that is at once accepting of the interconnections of daily life as much as a complex web of life – an ontology familiar to ecologists — but one that remains mostly unknown to expert-based rationality. Cultural rationality aims to disarm specialized expertise and undresses the charade of all-knowing consultancy to identify "real and important dangers that hide behind the assumptions and generalities buried in the expert's calculations" (Fisher, 1996: 200). Basing analysis on the experiences of lay-people in their environments, this popular participation values its own opinions over those of experts and "trusts process rather than evidence" to ensure that "decisions are reached fairly and without deceit" (Fisher, 1995: 197).

Cultural rationality makes headway towards this goal by putting faith in democratic process, appealing to local knowledges and soliciting broad boundaries. Proponents of cultural rationality lay claim on the rationality of irrational emotional responses by defining reason as a passionate engagement determined to "get to the bottom of things" (Peters, Cf. Torgerson, 1999). Green political thought such as that

of Dryzek (1987, 1990, 1999, 2000), Torgerson (1990, 1999), and Lovins (1977, 1999) explicitly values lay rationality and judges that “emotional” responses actually help enhance the “rationality” of decision making process by serendipitously avoiding costly (and especially for decisions mired in concrete) long-lasting mistakes (Lovins, 1977). As Featherstone sees it, the understanding of urban space through “talk of the *flaneur*... raises questions about the relationship between the aesthetic experience of public spaces and the possibilities that these same spaces hold for citizenship” (1998:911). In the spirit of organic urbanism, Jane Jacobs (2000), urges a regaining the capacity to feel awe in our surroundings. With this capacity, the empowered city-zen-*flaneur* re-culturates organizations to transcend the banal and the ordinary, and offers its own particular brand of rational expertise. The city-zen-*flaneur* and the modern counterpart of the engaged citizen, acting through space, with awe (Jacobs), art and emotion (Fisher) fields a vision that is at once imaginative and rational.

It has been suggested that the visual orients the brand of modernity used in the organization of spaces for production and identity (Boyer, 1983; Featherstone, 1998).⁴ The method chosen to collect the city’s information, either by individuals or professional planners, underscores assumptions about spaces and its relationship to the individual.⁵ Critical theory neatly introduces to the lexicon “ways of seeing” that expose the links between the methods of data collection and the application of rationality. In this vein, a “mole’s eye view” — understood as a way of seeing spaces

⁴ This connection between scientific vision, knowledge and social change is made more explicit by Boyer, “Knowledge, which is neutral, objective, technical and scientific, beyond the domain of special group and class interest, became the ideal motivator for social change. It was an empirical screen behind which the basic contradictions of uneven economic development within the order of American cities would withdraw” (1983: 272).

as lived experiences shaped by memory — is closely, though not exclusively, associated with cultural rationality. It immerses itself in the sensations of the city to see through the alleys, roads, shops and parks from the everyday life experiences of shopping, working, playing and makes no assumption to understand the totality of the physical city in one stroke.

The on-the-ground-view-from-here is quite different from the “bird’s eye view” of official maps, orderly rational planning and forecasted demographics. Synonymous with technical rationality, the two-dimensional oversight of the bird’s eye understands space as a value-free geometrical relationships and precludes the individual person-in-environment experiences as valuable in and for themselves. The survey, as the tool of the bird’s eye view scientific plan, studies city life through the isolated statistical derivatives and looks through an omniscient lens able to oversee, compute and understand the multitude of forces at play inside and outside the city. These snapshots of information detect, and reflect the “plan over life” perspective that has mediated the relationship between places and spaces, citizen and architecture, planner and planned upon. This critique of the cut-off-from-street-life Master Plan underpins the critique of the bird’s eye view.

Perception as an agent of modernity is most active in framing the “street.” Seen from the unmediated “neutrality” of the plan, “new” streets are laid out as logical extensions of the urban system, needed to service increasing demand. Yet, in the light of a “mole’s eye view”— or person-in-environment — the rationality of such an exercise may seem quite ridiculous, if not offensive. Showing the

⁵ Drawing on Habermas, it could be claimed that survey data, such as the one used to plan the city and the street were; “incorporated in the social life-world only through technical utilization, as technical

invidiousness of technical rationality, the street appropriately acts as a microcosm for the debate between visions of modernity. Prominent urban social movement theorist Warren Magnusson (forthcoming) has urged political economists to think the political *through* sites where “politics and political theory are dimensions of the same thing”: living dimensions of everyday life. As a history-site for social struggle and a special place for citizens of the city, the street continues to offer spaces from which to contest visions of modernity embedded in mechanical conceptions of matter and life offered by techno-methodological science. Like the city-zens contesting the re-spatialization of their streets, the process-oriented ontology espoused by greens explains the web of life much in the same way Jane Jacobs explains the street.

Symbol of diversity, urban living, and modernity, the street has long been, and continues to be a place to protest for and against changes, a place for citizens of various classes to meet (in unison – or in conflict), by accident or by design, to contest the established economic or political order and make demands on the dominant interests of the day through a show of public force. The street offers a particularly fascinating set of ideological, social, and economic confluence of contestation and repression, of liberation and constraint, of movement and idleness. Moreover, because of occasional success and recurring repression and despite of armed state presence, social movements have often found or attempted to find their voices in the street. Roadways have not only offered a physical location to coalesce and act out popular liberation; around them urban city-zens have also formed more mundane insurrections opposed to the rupture that large, dividing, concrete road-swaths impose on their community. The street has formed an object around which to

knowledge” (1970:52).

rally opposition to ideal modernist conception of movement, space, and identity within city landscapes. In particular it has been the site of opposition to the 20th century's functional classification of street life, whose engineers and designers viewed pedestrian and public life as safety hazards (Jacobs et al., 2001) and dedicated themselves to accelerate the speed of economic expansion along these axial conduits. Rallies around expressway formation through communities powerful enough to mount an effective campaign have saved numerous communities from the noxious effect of such large-scale projects and given them the time and space for generation and re-generation of diversity.⁶ In short, the street acts to provoke place-based residents to oppose and/or celebrate the lived urban life regardless of the time and space of the proposed roadway.

A political economy of road-congestion offers the street as context of place and time to think about the meaning of politics in the special places of urban life. It reads through the “new” and “old” discourses that have planted themselves at a traffic light deciding what must stop, what must proceed with caution and what must proceed as fast as the speed governor allows. This “thinking through” observes the imaginary, the complexity, and co-existence of street-life and sets it in contrast with the simplicity and separation of functionalist planning. In establishing an architectural order and citizen constitution as a site for everyday life, the street assumes its place as a medium for “seeing and hearing” blinded modernization that has deadened the vibrant dance of healthy cities and bequeathed upon it a bio-mechanical replacement.

⁶ Well-known examples include the blocking of the Spadina Expressway in Toronto in the 1960s and the successful bid to stop the Mount Hood Expressway in Seattle in the 1980s.

Bio-Mechanical Rhythms

“It was a low dull quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped by cotton. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and for with heavy strides, as if excited to the fury of the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! What could I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!— ‘Villains!’ I shrieked, ‘dissemble no more!’ I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!— is the beating of this hideous heart!”

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart*

The buried heart of urban landscape is mediated by a deep and rich history: the rhythms of the “old ticker” defining and defined by an accelerating pace of life. To the tuned ears and eyes, a faint but resounding “tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock” can be heard through the few cracked passages in the layered and buried history of the modern city. Present and past, exposed and hidden, this histor(y)city is composed of movement, architecture, social expression, and ideology embedded in the built place of modern city-life-form. The order and control of movement through these city-spaces has been set to the pace of modernity, making-up corridors of time set to a pentametered whole. Its individual parts, as echoes of the past and mirrors of the present, follow cyclical patterns pumping space and time through the arteries to the heart of the centre-city like cogs in a mechanical clock. Just as modernity’s

triumphant symbol of time is often found hovering over the town's central landmark, it marks the dominance of the landscape that lies below. The clock, the metaphysical and physical heart of modernity's city, clangs, ticks, and tocks, all the while driving, mediating, consuming and constructing work, time and space within the city walls. In this socio-physical landscape, a histor(y)city lies mysteriously to be uncovered beneath the floorboards.

Appropriately, Poe's haunting contrast between delusional festering and smooth, rational, good natured order transmutes the furious (dis)-rationality of action (or non-action) undertaken under conditions where serious communicative barriers exists. This vignette echoes the non-expressed conflict between emotional rage of the subject and the calm of the professionals present in the city's urban dilemma. Despite the unspoken protest to time-space compression, the progressive increase of pace continues and the subject's silent alienation remains unattended. Markedly unable to communicate to the steadfast rationality of the officers, the mind speaks, but is not heard, the heart is heard, but not seen. Much like Poe's heart, the clock to which urban life beats is not only physically hidden beneath, but is entombed by language. The city's watch is confined by the cotton webbing of discourse, its symbolic attributes insinuated into the silence of alienation, the material mood and spirit of the hidden bio-mechanical time/space that consumes city-life. The historical layers that have shaped city landscapes are equally concealed by the language and history of modernism's urbanity. Like Poe's narrator, the city's narrator, the city-zen-*flaneur*, has also been subdued by the ordered street. Road planning's technical rationality has

been unable to recognize, hear, or even see the loud, and surely emotional protestations emanating from the local against a certain unsustainable street order.

Contained inside and beneath the spaces of the cities' historical bio-physical core, the space-time combination of the rational city could be called a locals "histor(y)city." Oblivious to the officers of traffic order, this faint histor(y)city moves to the bio-mechanical rhythm set out by the 19th century Paris prefect Baron Georges Haussmann's *grand boulevard*. Envisioned "as arteries in an urban circulatory system" (Berman, 1982: 151), Napoleon III's modernization project simultaneously provided openings for unprecedented movement of goods, people and information through (and for a first time across the city) while offering "new" places for masses of people to assemble.

In altering patterns of movement, this spatial design created uncommodified spaces for gatherings in its terraced cafés, sidewalks, tree-lined streets and "sweeping vistas" for strollers of all classes to enjoy. It became a new aesthetic from which to collect the various actors of the city and, in particular, from which to create a different sense of order, functionality, and movement.⁷ Thus, in an effort to decongest the medieval city, Haussmann created marvelous new economic, social, and aesthetic spaces for large numbers of people to congregate, all the while taking special care to ensure that his multi-way boulevards provided for multi-modal transportation and a multitude of functions (Berman, 1982; Jacobs et al, 2001). Along with these multi-modal spaces, and the opening up of the city for the 19th century *flaneur*, Haussmann's macadamed lane-ways for carriage traffic also initiated the segregated

⁷ These "new spaces" were also created at a great cost to the tens of thousands of poorer residents displaced in the wake of *les grand projets*.

places for large volumes of carriage traffic to flow through the city on these “speedways for traffic,” what were in a sense the first expressways (Berman, 1982; Jacobs et al, 2001).⁸

The tale of his imaginative boulevards would become somewhat tragic. Haussmann’s imaginative separation of function would later be essentialized by utilitarian modernization, whereby the macadamized part of the street, the section reserved for carriage/car traffic would become the predominant and — later in the 20th century urban expressway — the only part retained from his design. Albeit by accident, the grand boulevard would give rise to the primacy of non—human street traffic over pedestrianism. Despite extensive applause for his retention and improvement of people-oriented elements of the old street and for his opening up of new gathering spaces, in creating a physical separation between the pedestrian and the vehicle — perhaps to his dismay — Haussmann undoubtedly established the carriage as the transportation of choice and rooted transportation as a class issue. It would begin a process in which the street would become hostile to pedestrians and render the practice of pedestrianism anti-modern. This separation of movement and the privileging of the car-riage would be retained and reinforced in futurist planning by architects, engineers, and hygienists alike, and come to full fruition as the automobile age came into full swing. In its most aggrandized form, *le Plan Voisin*, the (in)famous Le Corbusier’s prototypical model for hyper-functional urbanism, made the urban thoroughway a capital testament to the mechanicism of high-modernity. Devoid of sweeping vistas, tree-lined islands, or wide sidewalks, his

⁸ For a review of the new spaces created by Haussmann/Napoleon grand boulevard plan see Berman (1982: 151-156), Jacobs (2001: 74-81).

street, like those of adopted as the North American standard, would become “machines for traffic.” This should come as no surprise since the French architect’s utopian calling was to “kill the street”; his mission to remove all remnants of the pesky, meddlesome pedestrians that encumbered daily traffic, clogged city streets, and slowed down the smooth functioning of the city. To his glee, early in the 20th century planning, (led by an obsession for vehicles, safety and efficiency, in coincidence with traffic engineering) would allow the restricted-access urban highway to rapidly become en vogue in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Subsequent ultra-utilitarians such as Robert Moses, and to some extent Jacques Gréber, would succeed in applying the methodology of limited-access transportation to city planning under the veil of the “harmonious” Garden City, replacing the multi-functional boulevard with a more brutal form of car-dominated movement.

Captured by the romantic idea of connecting the countryside directly to the home, the Garden City accepted the principle of parks as moral regenerators. First initiated in Letchworth, England in 1905 and inspired by Ebenezer Howard, the Garden City proposed bucolic single-family residences interspersed by parks and open spaces and built the farms, the mills, and the factories away from the exclusive residential living spaces “for the good of us all” (Riseboro, 1997). Distinct from the chaos and disorder of urban life, the Garden City relied upon extensive parkways to connect geometrically-ordered spaces for home, work, and leisure.⁹ Park and parkway systems such as Chicago’s North American version of Garden City ideas was “chiefly a counterbalance to the congestion of the city” (Rybczynski, 1995: 126)

⁹ In Riseboro’s estimation Howard’s Garden City resulted “...in a prodigal consumption of land, offering plenty of light and air but little of the dynamism of the traditional city” (1997: 235).

While promising modern, efficient spaces for progress, and green open spaces for democracy and health, the romanticism of this urban vision placed auto-mobility at the center of the “civilized city.” In its North American adoption in the late 1920’s, designers added their own ideas, including those of the City Beautiful Movement, “the most important being to separate pedestrian and vehicle movement” (Riseboro, 1997: 258). In particular, parkways were devoted entirely to the enjoyment of motorists, establishing “a uniquely privatized form of public space” that “used physical design as a means for social screening” (Berman, 1982: 299). The Garden City parkway in all its romanticism would sweep aside other forms of urban transportation, solidifying the internal combustion car-riage as the transportation of choice and the class symbol of upward mobility.

The bounded chaotic action of the boulevard’s “modern” cousins — the urban expressway and the limited access romantic parkway — offers that hidden intersection between the ideational and the sensate, between the beating order of mechanized motorization and the celebration of dancing pedestrians. Road-ways and their competing visions of movement offer the symbolic and material meeting between the “rationality” of city planning (technical rationality) and “irrationality” of citizens (cultural rationality). Enacted on an individual and collective basis, these modern boulevards are in the words of Berman, “a perfect symbol of capitalism’s inner contradictions: rationality in each individual capital unit, leading to anarchic irrationality in the social system that brings all these units together” (1982: 159). In a bounded space, it reunites the creativity of the city-zen with the epistemology of the

city-zen-*flaneur* and that of the ordered planner while it blurs rationality, conceals celebration, and motivates madness.

B. Seeing Green

The “Double Failure” of Technical Rationality

In the image of utilitarian modernization’s street-life enclosure, the language of road-way discourse (like other questions of technology) is guided by technical rationality, which Fisher describes as “a mind set that puts its faith in empirical evidence and the scientific method, appeals to experts for justifying policy decisions, values logical consistency and universality of findings, and judges non-quantifiable impacts to be irrelevant to political decision making” (1995: 192). Technical rationality, argue scientism’s critics,¹⁰ emphasizes non-personal inputs and uses “hypothetico-deductive methods” vested with predictive power to translate codified responses as the “rational ideal of decision-making” (Lovins, 1977; Habermas, 1992; Fisher, 1998). Based on probabilistic thinking and denuded of context, the responses to hypothetical situations constructed by this method are nonetheless perceived as “impartial reason, which exercises a supreme, unquestionable authority in pursuit if the universal well-being of humanity” (Torgerson, 1999: 11). Traffic management relies on these quantitative models to forecast the type, level, and distribution of socio-environmental effects acceptable to the political constituency of the city. According to this techno-mechanicism, cities are simply a collection of hardwired

¹⁰ Torgerson describes scientism as “the celebration of science as the only form of legitimate knowledge.” (1999: 76).

parts which need fixing, connecting, or greasing. The rational techno-traffic management response to road congestion and “intersection failure” is to meet probable demand with ever-increasing productive expansion of road-capacity.

Embedded in these normative assumptions is the belief that enhanced auto-centered mobility is a necessary means to grease the “concrete commons” of the local economy. According to the mechanistic econo-engineered solutions, road system “development” is necessary to relieve overloaded road capacity, to prevent the atrophy of local “growth.” Firmly rooted in atomistic freedom and economic growth values, the costs of traffic delay and traffic system efficiency are often viewed as the most important issue in urban planning. Critical geographers such as Mick Smith (2001), drawing on work by Henri Lefebvre, have pointed out that the “modern spirit” of city construction has created abstract “no where” space, empty of difference, of which the functional goal of physical and mental city spaces “is precise, to get from one point to another”; as such, the modern city works like a large distributor cap, before a citizen can act or, more precisely, before the citizen can consume, movement from A to B is necessary. In Coughlin’s (1994) words, “before you do anything (in the city) you have to get there.” City life, according to this view, is one of circulation of parts between points, a giant Cartesian game of geometry, of repetition, and of hermetically-sealed mobile metal machines moving along set axis. Smith (2001) critiques the atomism of car-dominated city-scapes as a “dislocating hyper-individualism and econocism” isolating functions from one another, the whole from their parts and parts from their whole. This driving discourse individualizes life and risk. The result of which is carved out public spaces allocated according to

individualized conceptions of space and time. To the detriment of collective spaces able to provide for more than one type of movement or activity, auto-consumption as communicative and one political value set is favoured by the space-mediating practices of transportation planning.

Greens and urban political economists have been equally critical of the administrative sphere as a homogeneous juggernaut that co-opts the creative orientation of street level activism and dampens the multiple sites of action (Torgerson, 1999; Magnusson, 1988; Jacobs, 1963; Smart, 1994). This administrative sphere of influence, what Plough and Krinsky (1987) call the “technosphere,” gathers a sureness in the ability of its “self-enclosed mind uncontaminated by strife and error” to grasp even the most complex issues (Torgerson, 1990: 120). Building on critical theory, Torgerson has called this unbridled faith in technical rationality the “administrative mind.”¹¹ All-knowing, all-encompassing, the mind-over-matter mantra of this collection-of-parts practices wisdom in the singular process of unified calculation, analysis, and conclusion. Relying on Weber’s iron cage, critics point out that this positivistic technocentrism has led to a displacement of civic responsibility in favour of the de-politicized Faustian promotion of the “orderly cause of industrialization” (Torgerson, 1999; Magnusson and Walker, 1988).

Urbanists, much like greens, condemn the “state bumbles” of institutional gigantism as much as the individualized irrationality of “market forces” (Rowe, 1997), arguing that both local markets and the local state have failed to adequately represent civic forces politically and architecturally. Canadian political urbanist Warren Magnusson (1994) contends that the modernist vision of constructed cities

has mixed entrepreneurial politics with market driven land-use allocation. Thus, civil society or the city of the *flaneur* has been squeezed between the state-centered municipal boosterism and autonomous market entrepreneurialism. This social space has been further limited by the economic planning and regulation of the national-rational state. Squeezing civil society between market and local state authorities, the engrained practice of local administrative rationality confines the vibrancy of civic life inside a de-politicized local techno-bureaucratic state. This phenomena “forecloses political spaces” restricting local authorities to a de-politicized ordering of civic life (Magnusson, and Walker, 1988: 555).¹² Unable to adequately represent citizens through the market or through the administrative rationality, the local state suffers from a “double failure of representation.”

Significantly for green urban ecologism, the technical administration of civic life and the framing of the administrative mind maintains an unsustainable model of the city (i.e. expansion as the means and ends of city planning). A historical reliance on the administrative rationality of exclusionary zoning has built urban forms that relied heavily on cheap energy and land (Rees, 1996), automobile addiction (Flink, 1975), and a perceived right to unrestricted auto-use (Coughlin, 1994). The nature of the local supply options has had, and continues to have, an enormous impact on the earth’s ecosystem where local activities have global implications (Roseland, 1998). The explosive growth of cities and the increasing power of the urban machine to consume peripheral resources is increasing the “ecological footprint” (Wackernel and

¹¹ For a more in-depth discussion of the “administrative mind” see Torgerson, 1990.

¹² For example, see Magnusson and Walker. As they note, “Thanks to the ‘iron cage’ of bureaucracy, however, aspects of life in civil society would be reduced to order by the state. Local authorities were

Rees, 1992, 1996) of urban centers. Recently, “smart” has entered the planning lexicon as a means to reduce the environmental and financial costs of municipal services.

Despite the acknowledgement of urban sprawl and its associated legacy of rampant air pollution, health risks, increased municipal service costs, and accelerated rates of natural resource consumption, the current balance of governance is neither vested with the functional ability or substantive legitimacy to curb the process of outgrowth. Contrary to claims of competency and effectiveness, the rationalized bureaucracy has been unable to mediate justly between cross-sections of social classes and interests (Leo, 1994), nor to correct the injustices suffered through an unequal distribution of the enviro-social impacts of billowing growth especially to “non-market players” such as urban core residents, tenants, women, the poor, the elderly, and the disabled (Schrecker, 1996).

Here legitimacy is understood as the legal mandate to “perform,” or delegate the tasks at hand, a responsibility that is upheld by the sanction of democratic decision making. Competency entails experience, access to resources, and an expansive area of expertise. Much like the definition of politics, legitimacy and competency is claimed by both technical and cultural rationality to support their particular understanding of expertise, knowledge and reason. On the one hand professional claims on exclusivity of expertise are used to foreclose the debate to certain voices, while on the other, and often at the same time, popular contestation

crucial to this purpose. As they became administrative agencies of the state, local government, like international relations, was de-politicized” (1988: 50).

often directly attacks these claims of competency and legitimacy to deconstruct the certainty of bureaucratic rationale.

Understandings of competency and legitimacy of who decides what and when, are important as they directly address the political and social inequities of pluralism's "unequal structure of representation" (Mahon, 1980). It also helps reveal the voices that have been left out from the tacit alliance for civic boosterism that has been forged between municipal governments and local developers. What Berman (1982) identifies as the Faustian compromise has given the long range development of productive forces priority through a synthesis of public and private power. While meant to "serve the best results for everyone" (Berman, 1982), the legitimacy and competency leant to the city "boosterism" has allowed the brunt of increased pollution and traffic density to be born unfairly by certain groups of citizens whose judgement and experience is deemed incompetent and illegitimate, and indeed un-modern and irrational.

Representing a disproportionate share of those who have no access to an automobile, these same groups are especially vulnerable to being left without a voice within transportation's instrumentalist/industrial struggle. As Schrecker notes, "...the process of making such decisions disenfranchises a substantial proportion of the population: if you are without a car you are without a vote in the transportation marketplace" (Schrecker, 1996: 82).

In many cases municipal councils have unwittingly served developers and their allies, and excluded these voices by servicing and subsidizing single family, ex-urban, single-use, and spatially segregated residential neighborhoods to the detriment of captive residents and residual populations (Fainstein, 2000, Berman, 1982). This

public-private land-based planning imperative is reinforced by operational budgets oriented towards planning, building, maintaining, and protecting property (Andrew, 1994). As a rational distributor of goods according to market needs, municipal planning operates under the assumption of objectively-fixed knowledge within already defined borders deploying discourses, professional knowledge, institutions, and legal regulation to re-order the chaos of the city into a functioning whole (Boyer, 1983). Thus, this double failure of representation of local governance has ignored the needs of urban city-zenship by relying on the inadequate instruments of administrative and economic rationalism.

Greens continue to advance a non-mechanical understanding of the interface between ecological and organizational systems. Tempering their ideology with ideas such as equilibrium, respect for difference, holism, interconnectedness and non-violence (Torgerson, 1999, Dobson, 2000, Eckersley, 1992), greens maintain a founding concern for the relationship between humans and their environment that distinguishes ecologism from its antecedent ideologies such as liberalism, marxism, conservatism and even feminism (Dobson, 2000). Consequently, Dryzek has argued, the green agenda is far too complex to be adopted by an all or nothing proposition: the complexity of this problematic ill-suited to liberal procedural mechanism. Greens continue their odyssey of searching out an eco-rational socio-economic paradigm beyond liberal instrumentalism and state capitalism.

The “double complexity” between human and ecological realms, is for greens, at the center of decision processes.¹³ It is the process of recognizing the

¹³ As Dryzek explains, “(w)hen human decision systems confront environmental problems they are confronted with two orders of complexity. Ecosystems are complex, and our knowledge of them is

interconnected relationship between these two systems, of the positive feedback mechanisms of symbiotic living into a “collective and long-term thinking” that green political thought, in a number of its shades, seeks to address (Dryzek, 2000; Jacobs, 2000).

In their critical review of environmental management, Paehlke and Torgerson (1990) have noted that an odd faith in the Leviathan of the administrative state has defined problems through the techno-bureaucratic practices of the same administrative sphere charged with managing these problems. In this view, the continued reliance on the administrative state, at various levels, has acted to subdue public and civic debate by appropriating the language and terms over collective futures as the exclusive realm of its own techno-administration (Torgerson, 1990; 1999). In its crudest form, “policy professionalism”¹⁴ -defined as the technical process of accumulating, handling and evaluating information and problem definition - maintains a “technocratic enterprise committed to the maintenance of the established order” (Torgerson, 1997: 345) in which an administrative mind captures and dominates problem definition. As Klodawsky and Andrew (1999: 161) argue: “The interaction of physical and social solutions runs completely contrary to the organizational logic of the state.” City administration has separated its services according to utilitarian goals without taking the connectivity of policy areas into account. This artificial separation of functions continues a long standing practice of subduing the dance of the street with an over-reliance on technical rationality.

limited... Human social systems are complex too... Environmental problems are found at the intersection of ecosystems and human systems, so one should expect them to be doubly complex” (1987).

¹⁴ See Torgerson (1997:351).

Modern, and most significantly, North American roadways embody the mechanistic model of rationality that is embedded in its planning practices as well as in the present and historical spatial production of urban form. In particular, in the abstraction from daily-life the “technocratic ideology” “understands the phenomenological world in terms of component parts that allow for abstracting the part from the whole, as well as increasingly specialized knowledge of each part” (Bowers 1982, 531). What Fisher (2000:196) calls the “phenomena of modern science” has established the ontological position of the street as an instrumental of the neo-positivist proposition. This technocratic ideology carried itself all the way into the depth of romantic urban planning, briefly parked itself there, then rolled on to express itself in today’s “new” road discourse.¹⁵

The chauffeured operation of environmental techno-bureaucracy, leads Paehlke and Torgerson (1990) to conclude that administration is an environmental problem in itself. Long concerned with complexity, greens postulate that the interactions between human and natural systems is beyond the managerial capacity of administrative rationality. In their view, it is political blockage that impedes effective environmental management and not a lack of administrative (public or private) efficiency. As city administration remains largely dedicated to physical solutions to

¹⁵ A closer examination of the symbols and imagination captured in the physicality of the street contrasts its the obsessive pursuit of the Newtonian thing-ordering street classifications with the inter-related phenomenology proposed by ecologists. As Fridjof Capra argues, “new” physics promotes matter as an inter-dependant dance where no singular parts exist in isolation. As he notes, “At the subatomic level the interrelations and interactions between the parts of the whole are more fundamental than the parts themselves. There is motion but there are, ultimately, no moving objects; there is activity but there are no actors; there are no dancers, there is only the dance” (1983:83). Avant-garde scientists long to be at the forefront of social change and to defy the restrictive model of rationality that confines them to the legacy of Cartesian material mechanicism. It so happens that in the case of matter, some physicists have defied the legacy of Cartesian material mechanicism and escaped the restricted rationality of its methodological confines to re-think and out-date the epistemological certainty of mechanical enlightenment.

the urban dilemma (Klodawsky and Andrew, 1999), the social has been neglected in part due to the function and in part due to the definition of planning. From both a green and a political economy perspective, an infatuation with roadway and infrastructure building has excluded significant sections of society, produced nefarious environmental side-effects, constructed unsustainable city forms, and largely overlooked the social from its planning exercise, all while promulgating a narrow vision of modernity. Concerned with the provision of rational development (Boyer, 1983; Wilson, 1991) for increased productivity rather than the social needs of its citizens, road discourse has foreclosed political spaces and opportunity. Yet at the same time road discourse, as a point of friction between visions of city life, continues to provide spaces for contestation for and within communities as well as inside and outside the local state. As Torgerson (1997) notes, such local contestations establish a point of contact between “the distinct and largely antagonistic worlds of policy professionalism and dissenting social movements.” The meeting of technical and cultural rationality during the process of contestation begins to disintegrate the walls that obfuscate local state representation and opens up the promise of the spaces for “reflexivity.” In order for contestation to be successful in re-orienting the local state, an interaction with it is necessary. A complete abandonment of the tools and resources of the administrative structure would be foolish and strategically disastrous. A re-thinking of local politics revolves around opening up those local spaces, much of which comes from a greater appreciation and acknowledgement by the local state of the contribution that can be made by the silenced voices of the local population.

Locating Spaces for Contestation

Green politics, like progressive politics of all forms, has too often been guilty of the same over-theorizing that by-passes opportunity for action of every day life. Tactically green politics has too often remained bound by theoretical debates over the value and orientation of “ecological consciousness” (Dobson, 2000; Torgerson, 1999) and of eco-philosophical bifurcations situated along a distinct anthropocentric/ecocentric fault line (Eckersley, 1992). It has remained confined by the search for the definition of what “counts” and what is “important” as well as by the debate over radical and reformists approaches to change. Moreover, it has been overly concerned in deciding which is the “object” to contest, “who” is the essential agent of change, and what is “the way” (Magnusson and Walker, 1988). Problematically, because of this extensive debate, environmental thought has often promoted a non-committal approach to political action embedded in its belief in the capacity of radical grassroots protestations to adequately contest the dominant political economy (Dobson, 2000). Not unlike political economy’s privileging of the nation state as container of politics, green political thought has ignored changes in space and the opportunity for new voices built in and around home and community (place) simply because it has overlooked the question, as Torgerson argues, of what is the *meaning* of politics.

In contrast, Torgerson (1999) professes a certain agnosticism to this issue and suggests greens focus less on discovering the “essential core” of environmentalism and instead think of the more important question of the meaning of politics and

specifically, the polycentric contrast to industrialism which binds greens and set them apart from productivist discourses. Certainly, and unfortunately, green political thought has been overly concerned with the eco-philosophical foundations of theory (the substantive) rather than the functional praxis of economic and political changes. Particularly green political thought is guilty of place-less-ness. As such, green political thought has not been able to define the theory and action of effective participation, or more accurately the practice of participation. Claiming that political action can be progressive and that “political learning is possible through local action” (Klodawsky and Andrew, 1999: 153), Magnusson’s approach, indeed his challenge, to ecologism is appropriate for green political thought. By urging political economists to “think through” places as a means to understand the meaning of politics, rather than to operationalize (obsolescent?) theory, or endeavour to speak in jargon for our own purposes, Magnusson orients green political thought around issues of city-zenship and the meaning of politics within a defined space. He urges, as does Torgerson, progressive politics to abandon their self-privileging ethos which acts as a barrier to inclusion and action, and to orient it around the diversity and multiplicity of place rather than through some revealed messianic consciousness of the “way.”

According to this thinking, a green democratic project that is at once critical and emancipatory is at first instance not as concerned with an ideal model as it is with the process of democratization. To manage an escape from the contradiction of market and state (and what Dryzek explains as the double complexity of human/nature relationships), green literature advances sustained and informed debate as a political strategy for resolving conflict. Dryzek (1990, 1999), Torgerson (1999),

and Lipietz (1996) in particular argue that in the process the focus of dialogue forges a social construction of reality more reflective of the interconnectedness of realms and with reconciling natural and human processes. Re-politicized nature, Lipietz notes, and expressive deprivation of time calls for autonomy (not “auto-mobility”), solidarity (not “solo-deity”) and ecology (not “eco-no-me”). It requires an imaginative process, including metaphor, and a new way of conceiving problem definition, deliberation and solution frameworks and emphasizes empowerment, city-zen participation and decentralized procedure.

Deliberative democracy of the type advocated by John Dryzek (1999) offers an alternative to liberal constitutionalism’s mechanical politics by providing space for talk and city-zenship and offers a way for dealing with the complex interactions between the social and the environmental realms. Explicitly, it is a means for transmitting public opinion outside the exclusivity of state centered politics (local or otherwise). In Plough and Krimsky’s terms this type of dialogue constitutes a “demosphere” that contrasts the closed exclusivity of the state’s “technosphere.” Quite convincingly, what Dryzek is advocating is democratic control of the political mechanisms of policy (not simply democratic control of those who are responsible for political mechanisms). Surely bold and perhaps a little hopeful, if nothing else Dryzek’s view of an “active civil society,” or Plough and Krimsky’s demosphere, seems to provide the orientation and context to time, work and city (in a non-contained political space) for expressing alienation beyond the choice preferences of liberal electoralism. It builds on the standard set by Klodawsky and Andrew (1999)

who wonder to what extent local political action can be progressive as well as what the “actual and potential” impact of such a strategy might be.

Paehlke and Torgerson (1990) insist that undemocratic measures are not necessary for effective administration. Most examples of environmental management infused with radical public involvement have handled the complexity of ecological concerns because of, not despite, the involvement of so-called “lay” views. In fact, since the 1970s greens have been prominent in the design and advocacy of democratic innovations including right-to-know legislation, citizen juries, policy dialogues, impact assessments, mediation, and conflict negotiation (Paehlke, 1989; Fisher, 1995). In part because of the “reflexive” tendencies of green political thought and in part because, as Capra notes, ecologism does not accept separative rationality, greens have actively promoted an opening up of discursive spaces. In the face of late capitalism’s risk, reflexive modernization of the kind offered by ecological politics (Hajer, 1995; Dryzek, 1999), urban political economy (Magnusson, 1996; Andrew, 1999; Keil, 1998) and imaginative city-zenship (Berman, 1982; Jacobs, 2000; Featherstone, 1998; Barber, 1984) makes possible, “new kinds of democratic politics where city-zens do not accept the authority of states and professional risk apologists working for government or industry” (Dryzek, 1999: 165).

Openings

Wherever urban environmentalism has succeeded in penetrating the “universe of political discourse” (Jenson, 1988) there has been a rallying point because of, and around, a particular issue, often with a specific focus on a place-centered contestation. Several authors including Eckersley (1992) claim that urban environmentalism has often arisen from “New Middle Class” residents that have been exposed to intensive – and spatially oriented — debates over air pollution and landfill siting (Torgerson 1999; Paehlke 1990; Fisher 1995). According to organizers and activists participating in these localized actions, “environmental city-zenship” is rarely only a result of *exposure* to land-based issues but has evolved during their participation in the *process* of information gathering, community action, and widespread campaigning attached to citizen activity (Gibbs, 1982; Jackson, 1992; May, 2001).¹⁶ Other potential for local action has accompanied the spatial relocation of middle-class information technology (IT) and knowledge workers (KW) into city-center neighbourhoods. These “mercenaries of cultural urbanity,” as Roger Keil has dubbed them, have imported a political project which supports an odd combination of pro-public and anti-public policy (Keil, 2000).

From a comparative perspective, Sellers (1998) has shown that by focusing on local experiences, European environmental movements have coagulated support into lasting electoral success. In his cross-national study he notes that “local interest

¹⁶ As Jackson has noted, his experience and exposure to citizen organizing, new-comers to these social movements have often positive views of instrumental politics. Once they have to face the stalling tactics, and apathy towards their concerns, citizens often reconsider their views. Jackson argues that

formation” around environmental issues has been linked to “the physical environments of localities.” As he observes, “Territorial policies addressed to transportation, preservation and development at the sub-national level have furnished the most consistent rallying point of green politics.”

Klodawsky and Andrew push the promise of a connection between space and political action even further, as they argue, “connection(s) have to be made between people’s understanding of how they feel about urban space and the making of public policy” (1999: 160). Klodawsky and Andrew emphasize that “(p)eople who use urban space understand this space” and therefore this knowledge of everyday living should guide the rational decision making (1999:162). If the argument is correct, a linkage between work, community, and the consequences of growth offers a potential practical strategy for transmuting environmental social movement into durable politics. However, this raises several significant questions. Has this strategy had much impact? Have these contestations expanded beyond the localized and specific?

Despite emerging concerns regarding the physical and social limits to ex-urban growth and tepid support for far-away wilderness preservation, North American urban environmentalism has remained mainly concerned with human health and welfare issues such as air pollution or chronic exposure to organic chemicals. As a progressive political strategy, the linking of local experience to ecological city-zenship, particularly one concerned with the consequences of city growth, remains an elusive goal. To echo Magnusson, locating sustainable “new

this immersion in local level politics develops politicized citizens that carries on to engage in issues that go beyond their own backyard.

spaces” for ecological city-zenship remains a puzzle with which green political thought continues to struggle.

In an effort to decongest this political blockage, Laurie Adkin’s strategy for collective action tactically reunites resistance to unmediated growth, or the spatial impact of sub-national (mis)planning, to democratic action. Working with new social movement theory, Adkin (1998) proposes building a durable ecological movement by linking work and time in order to offer city-zens durable alternative lifestyle choices. As Adkin states, “The very complex task of building a social movement is to link discursively the kinds of needs which many subjects are expressing to democratic principles, to arguments about the condition for happiness, and to concrete proposals for change” (1998: 307). She argues that by liberating subjects to express their needs in non-consumptive ways, democratic arguments for happiness are developed with the possibility of being transformed into initiatives for change. Adkin quite convincingly argues for a translation of the discursive conditions of a movement into concrete changes that alter the conditions of a subject’s lived life.

As Adkin laments, “More than ever, commodity relationships seem to determine the limits, the timing, and the contents of our natural experiences” (1998: 303). Interpersonal and interspatial encounters are mediated through and within this commodity market, in pursuit of better jobs, better pay, and better neighbourhoods. As a result, work and home are spatially dislocated and workers deprived of time, what could be called the alienating rupture from space and time.

The time and space of work is central to the productivist go-go happiness discourse of urban consumerism. Hyper-functionalism makes it more difficult for

people to “carve out spaces between home and work” (Hohenburg, 2000) that are uncommodified or unmediated by individualized petrol driven consumption.

Individual stresses, along with the necessity to work harder and longer, are in many ways attached to the spatial separation between work lives and “other” lives, such as family or recreation. The spatial location of “home and workplace, location of child care, access to transportation and availability of ... support and services,” including recreation, can, as Kemp (2001: 17) argues, simplify or complicate experiences of work and home. As the time-distance to work/home compounds non-material deprivations, the search for material compensations to lost time— with family, friends or self — also intensifies. Moreover, in an effort to limit the lag between work and home, individuals often resort to multiple vehicle existences in order to meet all the time demands of “true’ middle class living. Having to work harder to meet the financial obligations of multiple car ownership, these households invariably increase their material needs and demands. Work for travel, travel for work becomes a self-fuelling discourse: the identity and production of auto-movement becomes the central function of urban life. The spatial configuration of happiness and freedom — that living which exists away from work and city — embodied by the sub or ex-urban existence and mediated through the automobile experience, completes a ritualized happiness linked to the alienating aspects of work and stress. North American urban living has internalized Le Corbusier’s dream of hyper-functional streets and the Garden City’s utopian nesting grounds. Materially, this imaginative Shangri-la drives expansionist road-discourse, directs social segregation and supercedes human welfare ecologism.

Urban ecologism focused on the day-to-day struggle of everyday life pierces through this being in time by orienting politics around the improvement of non-consumptive material civic goods and services such as transit, health, livable spaces, air quality, waste diversion and traffic reduction. Innately and invariably practical, quotidian and inter-connected, it attempts to remedy the consumptive stresses compacted in time and space. These “real activities” of everyday life have been in the past deemed as peripheral to the project of social change (Magnusson and Walker, 1988): they are the daily choices and actions left out of emancipatory politics. A counter-hegemonic ecologism, Adkin argues, must be “articulated in the real experiences of deprivation and alienation” (1998: 307). By linking the material conditions of urban lives (or quality of life) to the freedom/happiness discourse of modern productivism, democratic opportunities for social change are opened up and the monopoly of the state as container of politics broken-down.¹⁷

To reach a reflexive green identity, Laurie Adkin suggests a re-politicization of urban life and city-zenship beyond abstractionism. In her words, “What is involved is a cultural struggle to transform values while at the same time making alternative choices structurally possible” (307). What Adkin calls for is a different imagination of time and space and a different set of alternatives to the limitations of auto-dominated urban life. Resistance requires, as Adkin suggests, a connection between daily life and a politics oriented around and towards the local state. By placing this dialectic of time and space at the center of her analysis on the basis of needs, Adkin

¹⁷ This phenomena is related to people’s willingness to de-work their lives, and adapt flexible working arrangements. It implies a willingness to forgo work and income for greater opportunity to participate in non-wage activities such as volunteerism, community action, parenting, care for elders and life management.

constructs, either by design or by accident, a democratic decongestant to ex-urban sprawl.

Decongesting Community Rationality

In the past 30 years, environmental social movements have challenged the role of expertise. In light of this interaction, more nuanced accounts have reconsidered the relationship between the seemingly “distinct, largely antagonistic” spheres of civil society and policy professionalism. Torgerson has pointed out that critics of administrative rationality (including himself) were often guilty of seeing “policy professionalism as a monolithic obstacle necessarily blocking the path of all social and political change” (1997:347). Through concerted action against and within the administrative realm, social movements have influenced agenda-setting, problem definition, and the scientism of the administrative mind (Paehlke, 1990; Torgerson, 1997). In particular, the prevalence of NIMBY activism challenged expert “monopoly on the relevant knowledge” (Torgerson, 1997: 357) and redefined problems as cyclical inter-dependencies. Within the policy professionalism itself there has been a realization that the hinged individualism of expert based-rationality is insufficiently equipped to govern the double complexity. Green political thought pins its hopes on further rejection of the techno-polity characterized by the progress and order mantra of un-reflexive modernity. Institutional change accompanies such a shift in the imaginative construction of complexity, as Torgerson notes, “As mechanistic metaphors become insufficient guides to a complex terrain, attention turns to the

possibility of designing “holistic” institutions in which inner and outer complexity would adequately match one another” (1997: 364).

Where do we look for such changes? The “double failure of representation” points to the inappropriateness of enhanced planning as an exclusive means to manage away the local, regional, and national resource stresses of expansionary cities. Historically, land-oriented regulation and planning has set-in a process that favours auto-mobility as the preferred option. This process has in itself also fed a pattern of real estate development that allows powerful social actors to influence the rational decision-making process. This process has commodified and bureaucratized the urban form. Both the market and the state have exteriorized decisions from the local community to be controlled either by a centralized political elite or the pervasive interest of capital. The task for municipally oriented political ecology consists of escaping the power of these two Leviathans to operationalize democratic mobilization as a political strategy for centering conflict within a public discursive realm.

Progressively establishing a niche for itself both from within the administrative realm and from outside its corridors, critical planning has offered alternative visions of how, and why cities should be designed. Increasingly a return to “the local” is being touted by progressives as one form of a number of legitimate contestations to econo-mechanism. Such re-scaling of the political, requires a direct confrontation of interests through participatory democracy that regulates not only the urban form but also local markets and its administrative realm. For transformative greens, these potential spaces of contestation open up the possibility for a consensual

politics beyond market and state imperatives, beyond the productivist relations of labour and capital, located strategically within the space offered by local politics to new political forces.

For greens as well as for social movement theorists, responsive, transparent, flexible and accountable governance is key to re-connected city-zenship (Paehlke and Torgerson, 1990; Barber, 1984; Lipietz, 1995; Klodawsky and Andrew, 1999; Magnusson, 1996; Keil, 2000). Greens have had their most lasting successes while challenging the technocratic problem definition. Torgerson (1997) argues that such a strategy is likely to have a greater impact than any attempt at “some sudden conversion to ecological consciousness.” The success environmental social movements have had in influencing the administrative sphere leads Torgerson to appeal to the participants of “transformative politics” to engage directly with policy professionalism as it provides a “site for contestation” upon which the “voices of dissent would become even clearer” (1997: 375). This thought is echoed by Keil, “If these newer complex forms of governance are to be found, it must be in the tradition of the progressive city, which in itself is a response to the complexity of its constituencies” (2000). Obliquely, both Keil and Torgerson argue that the formation of ecologically rational city governance requires political solutions responsive to civil society rather than a new form of enclosed municipal administration. Torgerson may express the opposition to instrumental liberalism most bluntly by extolling the ethos of action, “To advocate democracy is not just to advocate procedures as the stock-in-trade as much of liberal democracy would have it, but also to advocate space for political action” (1999) The most appropriate site for political action in the context of

municipal planning seems to be a citizen-led contestation of techno-rational problem definition.

This ontology appeals to the call made by green political thought for a cultural re-organization, a use of vision to transcend the banal and ordinary. By exposing this banality, the metaphor of ecology provides an image of interdependence and interconnectedness of democratic struggle where praxis is co-dependant and recognizant of complexity. An ecological metaphor provides an informal forum for communicating the challenges to industrial discourse, the convictions of unimpeded growth, and the administrative grip on politics. The street can indeed lead to the public square as much as to the modernity's mechanical motorway, and towards a decongested city-zenship, if its lane-ways are re-opened to the wholeness of life and away from the uniform accommodation of the automobile.

CHAPTER II- CAPITALIZING MODERNITY'S MOVING MECHANISMS

"With respect to the temporal dimension, social scientists tend to be almost obsessively present-minded and uninterested in history, while historians tend to reify politics, or even politicians, or rely on arbitrary periods, such as centuries. Political economists need to take both economics and history seriously and define politics broadly."

Watkins, 1997 (30)

Ottawa's Regional Planning Imperative

The "new" and the "old" City of Ottawa constitutes a special place as the nation's capital and the federal government's symbol of "unity and pride." Throughout its histor(y)city, from the original Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC) of 1899 to the present incarnation as the National Capital Commission (NCC), various federal planning agencies have been bestowed with special planning rights and responsibilities over the National Capital Region (NCR). Created as a special ward of federal legislation, these special legal entities have superimposed their vision on top of physical/political spaces of city and region to sculpt green spaces, institutions and tourist spectacles "all of the nation can be proud of" (Gréber, 1950). The glorious cornerstone of this national construction, the 1950 *Plan for the National Capital* defined parkway modernization as the means to constructing Ottawa as a majestic, beautiful and productive national synthesis of nature and city. Administered by an independent crown corporation and directed by a cross-national board of appointed commissioners the *National Capital Commission's* mandate¹⁸ has been carried out vigorously by autocratic politically-charged chairs. Mostly ignored by the

¹⁸ The NCC official mandate is stated as, "to plan and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in keeping with its significance as the seat of the Government of Canada"(<http://www.capcan.ca>).

absentee oversight of apathetic commissioners, city officials and local residents have forged a frictional relationship with the commission's political and administrative structure. At the same time, citizens have embraced the persistent myths built on top of the green spaces the NCC created as part of its envisioned modernity. The structure and direction of the NCC, as captain of regional planning, has sparked over the years – often at the same time – protest and wonder, disgust and amazement.

As an example of the local, the NCR is rare and distinct: it is the only sub-provincial jurisdiction that is a creature of the federal government rather, than as all other local states, a creation of the provincial legislation. Due to its unique jurisdictional status, the layered interplay between the local (Ottawa), regional (NCR), provincial (Ontario/Quebec)¹⁹ and national (Canada) jurisdictions operating within this defined space provides a complex and contradictory backdrop to the dynamic of the “concrete commons.” Theorizing the role of regional planning in North America and relating it to the NCC permits a thinking through of the landscape and identity of this constructed place. It helps focus attention on those elements of past and present that set the background for the existing interchanges between administrative mind and lay expertise. In both the imagination of citizens and local policy professionals, the NCC's ghost looms large, its footprint dominates the landscape.

The shaping and re-shaping of Ottawa is intricately interwoven with the plans and desires of Canada's Prime Ministers and their chosen capital captains. The rapprochement between identity and production as suggested by Mahon (1993), and

¹⁹ To further complicate the region's political representations, the NCR straddles the Quebec/Ontario border.

as applied in the current epistemology of urban studies offers the particularity of the political, ideological and cultural “text of history” to specify the “underlying structures and patterns that inform the way ideas are developed” (Clement, 1997: 4). Focusing on the narrative contained in the National Capital Commission’s 1950 *Master Plan*, this chapter looks at Ottawa’s “old” planning histor(y)city as a manifestation of a particular brand of “hardwired” modernity.

Theorizing about these roles and actions, and the NCC’s stranglehold on the projection of Ottawa relates a specific tale of modernity’s moving mechanism that echoes the process of rationalized planning in North American cities specifically oriented to the formation of “new” 20th century capital and capitals. The configuration of cities into efficient spaces for industrial production was an active component of early 20th century planning initiatives. This modernization mutually constituted the modern citizen and the identities of what is modern, what is ecological, what is mechanic, what is organic. In Ottawa, the building of Parkways was the cornerstone of Ottawa’s administratively driven re-building initiatives and a manifestation of the bio-mechanical order of 20th century planning.

Auto-Modernizing Through Space and Time

“North American Cities are designed as continuous circuits connecting the factory to the mall to the household (via the automobile). Whether it is in McDonalds or on the Freeway, time is of essence and patience is short. One is meant to keep moving on this circuit. As foreigners often observe, in North America, ‘people live to work’, and the compensation is consumption.”

Laurie Adkin, 1998 (305)

At the turn of the 20th century North American city-life pulsed with diversity, its crowded neighbourhoods and congested streets teeming with labour power and a hodge-podge of industrial production. This variety in life and action, while offering spaces for spontaneity, often subjected working classes to the social inequities of compacted living conditions, exposed them to the unavoidable life-shortening by-products of neighbourhood production and conditioned them to general levels of poverty. Located near home-places, un-regulated industrial workplaces exposed not only workers to the inhalation and ingestion of noxious point-source pollution, but also subjected families, gardens and community institutions to these unhealthy fumes. Cognizant of the effect on urban populations, a variety of voices including moral reformers, church groups, charitable organizations, business leaders and industrial capitalists demanded a spatial re-construction of city spaces (Boyer, 1983; Berman, 1982).²⁰ Overall, city improvers equated the social inequity of increasing poverty, congestion and air-soluble health-risks not as socio-economic injustices but as problems associated with urban disorder and housing construction. Their calls for reform focused on location as the “solution” to the “problem” of

²⁰ The Gréber report provides a clear example of this belief in the role played by the physical on liberating the working classes from abject poverty. The caption of Photo 43 of this report reads:

poverty. Supported by the influential view of the capitalist class, which carried much weight with municipal councils, the reformers viewed the crowded organicism and teeming congestion to be blocking the smooth servicing of capital. Converged interests between civic and business leaders provided the municipalities with the legitimacy and rationale to proceed with a rational call to order.

The disorganized and unhealthy city was to be provided with an industrial decongestant administered from the mechanical order and provided through “scientific planning.” As city improvers argued, the built city required in the first instance a “rational systematic process” to co-ordinate and rationalize the city for accumulation, and in the second an architectural order to improve the moral fortitude of its city-zenship. Among the directing and re-orienting of the disorganized parts of a city into managed and ordered wholes, deliberate measures such as sectoral zoning and auto-way construction were activated. In this ritualized clean-up of the visual squalor of the city, sources of pollution were displaced and moved to the easterly extremities of the city, residences and communities re-positioned in pristine, clean and low-density environments. A high-tech auto-centred segregation of function connected the ordered city-zens and spaces into a working productive identity tied to the industrial regime. City planning was to be the tool from which to build this efficient machine vested with the all important task of distributing land and allocating resources. This ordered functionality relied extensively on the Master Plan as the *cogito* of the engineering and architectural planning exercise. The move to a mechanical order would be efficient, rational and scientific. A utopian faith

“*Blighted Houses*. These regrettable conditions to not arise from poverty, but from lack of foresight and regulation resulting in blight and misuse in the development of land.”

underlined this socio-scientific method, as Leisse explains, “the rationality of the new scientific methodology was considered to be an independent force capable of leavening the social milieu” (1994: 21).

Meant to deliver quick and ready made proposals for sweeping away the undesirable aspects of city diversity, removing the squalor and congestion of unhealthy residences and addressing the infrastructure deficiencies that impeded production, regional planning emerged to zone the city into “logically ordered environment(s) (which) could discipline and turn to social advantage the base instincts of the individual”(Boyer, 1983: 15). In short, planning ensured that pesty and undesirable immoral workers (or pedestrians) did not interfere with the smooth functioning and growth of maturing capitalism.²¹ Part of this ideology of post-war planning used the “civilizing” influences of the country to de-politicize the citizen and to re-create a nostalgic harmony with nature. As Wilson writes, the anti-urban ideology of these planning doctrines emphasized healthy country living where: “workman could spend their evenings doing healthy digging and gardening, instead of repairing to the pub or attending seditious political meetings. The garden city was a sanitized utopia with the obsessional, controlling, perfectionism that characterized all utopias” (1991: 104). Influenced by the 19th century Scottish social evolutionist Patrick Geddes,²² the emphasis on person-in-environment planning embedded the “mysterious” relationship between human and nature within policy and planning decisions. Such an “ecological imperative,” as Mercer (1990) describes the

²¹ This included stripping away from the street the dangerousness of drinking, gambling, crime, prostitution and illegal street peddling. The leveling of Lebreton Flats can be partly attributed to a desire to eliminate the “urban decay” and “moral corruption” from close knit industrial communities.

convergence of scientific methodology and romantic naturalism guided by Geddes, located social well-being in municipally oriented health and recreation, and city-zenship in leisure. As an idea carried over by Garden City patrons it shaped an ideal citizen-type that was more than a productive identity: the Master Plan melded together a productive city form that shaped identity as much as it did productive relations. As Meller (1990) suggests what Geddes and his disciples intended “was to create a new way of thinking centred on the production and development, not of goods, but of people.” The citizen was to become those productive functions through the identity wrapped around the idea of good city-zenship.

The adoption of a physically interventionist strategy to city regeneration was most aroused by the building and administration of transportation and communication networks. Extensive re-building of city networks within the modern mode of production was accelerated through the building of road networks, the promotion of de-centralized residency nodes and the spatialization of industry. It allowed for a different type of communication between its residents, workers and producers; in the words one of the most prominent city planners of the 20th century Nelson Lewis, the building and orientation of transportation networks was to provide the necessary arterial corridors, “to reduce as far as possible the time and expense of transportation to and from the home, office, shop or factory, from and to points outside the city” (Boyer, 1983). As such, the dual goal of improving the circulatory system and ensuring the recovery of private and public capital by encouraging commerce and efficient movement of its parts along communicative axis, has defined the building of

²² Mercer (1990) describes Geddes as a “Scottish botanist, biologist, author...and sometime mentor of Lewis Mumford.” The latter is largely regarded as a driving force behind the Garden City ideal.

road-ways throughout various expressions of modernism. Indeed the role of movement in urban space formation has a long standing connection to the form and function of urban capitalist life.

The Ideology of Movement: Valuing “The Concrete Way”

“No matter where I go, I see the same thing. People today are busier than they’ve ever been. They get up early to get their kids to school. Race off to their Jobs. Work hard all day to pay the bills. Pick the kids up. Make dinner. Help with homework. And go to bed. Then they start all over again.”

Former Ontario Premier Mike Harris, 2001

The premier’s comments in a speech made to the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce announcing a joint study of a ring-road for the City of Ottawa on March 21st, 2001 offer an excellent primer on the rationality applied by modern road-based transportation expansionism. Appropriately, this statement orients the transportation problem around people’s capacity to balance the numerous demands posed by and to the tempo of modern city living. It provides the “good productive urban citizen” with access to adequate transportation circuits able to alleviate the run-around stresses of moving to and from their multiplicity of functions. Harris’ comments, like those of Nelson Lewis, pinpoint the historical linkages to the mechanical rationality of the radial city. By orienting decision processes in relation to movement, length of commute and the stresses of such extensive transportation patterns, individual discontent is made analogous to the daily overdose of car-dominated movements. In this way, the urban dilemma is set up as one of movement lubrication, thus privileging the “need to get there” and subsequently prioritizing axial decongestion as

“the solution” to the “problem.” It elaborates on the search for order and productive identity that viewed “the nature of the city to be a functional tool, a machine useful to the process production” (Boyer, 1983: 66). Consolidated in spatial governance and interventionist strategy, the objective of moving people, goods and information became the organizational *modus operandi* of the physical order.

Indeed, the idea of being a truly modern citizen is fully wrapped-up in the conception of freedom, autonomy, empowerment, escape and social mobility offered by the car. Built along the expressways of modernity, the value base which permeates the spirit of the modern city is fully anchored in the passive-movement of the automobile: our cities are best seen through the windshield of the automobile. As Gideon remarked in 1938-39 during lectures on modern design and planning,²³ “The space-time feeling of our period can seldom be felt so keenly as when driving” (Berman, 1982: 302). Conditioned by automobile centred movements the isolated constitutionality of city-zenship revolves around the “uniquely privatised form of public space” mediated by auto-time to such an extent that almost every aspect of daily life - waking up, driving to work, punching the clock, lunch, break, meetings, appointments, quitting time, evening news, dinner, home, recreation, family, neighbourhood - is defined in relation to modernity’s marvellous metaphor and timed to its pentametered pendulum. The modern citizen lives, breaths, thinks and most significantly moves in relation to this ticking-tock. Mobility has become the end in itself; the means-end relationship forgotten to such a degree in that unchecked

²³ Specifically, Gideon is applauding Moses’ supra-modernist planning of urban expressways in New York.

individual use of the “concrete commons” promises an almost inevitable exhaustion of road-way capacity.

Magnusson and Walker (1988) actively argue for a re-thinking of the “Galilean” ontology of western logical tradition that objectifies processes as self-contained entities, orders them in set dualisms and conceptualizes politics in bordered space. Played out on the fields of open spaces, the city’s places such as work, home and industry appear as “either/or” modernist entities, each of these individual parts connected by The Way of the Auto-mobile. The universal time/space conceptions of this modern entity are absorbed by the rationality of city planning and development. Set in the flattened perspective expressed of the two-dimensional objectified and a-historical knowledge, this Galilean exercise impresses the collected survey data onto descriptive planning documents. Thus, ideology is not only embedded in the physical space of cities but it also surfaces inside planning documents: the “City Plan,” such as Gréber’s *Master Plan* mediates and reconciles the ideological and material contradictions between capital, social and economic interests within the captured confines of the planning document. Within these rational fixtures, each actor’s motives are hidden beneath a clinical neutrality of “The Comprehensive Plan.” Space, and people in this mode of rational interventionism are considered to respond to the rational, comprehensive, scientifically administered plan: the exhaustion of the road-way commons set in the two dimensional texts of maps and planning documents. As Rybczynski comically notes, modern planning was attracted by the “rational” aspects of Cartesian form played out as “cars over there, living over here, work above, play below. Voilà! The city of the future” (1995: 159).

Perceptions of the physical world, as set in modern city life, are reflections of the ideal body/mind Cartesian separation of body and mind perpetuated by modern scientism. An extension of Magnusson and Walker's critique of dualism, this argument presented by Whitehead amongst others, can be read as an argument that a world owned by the mind of the self relegates the "other" such as body or nature to an unconnected realm. Within the city plan the "other" of home and nature is defined by and within the notion of the geometrical purity of the tick-tocking clock. This universalistic conception of nature, mirrored in the understanding of human action as following natural laws, directs attention to "simplistic relations and elements that could be regulated such as flows of traffic" (Boyer, 1983: 69), to conceive of planning as a universal "process of causality" interacting in motion "according to mathematically expressed formulas in geometrical space" (Leisse 1994: 131). This officialized mastery of nature and home extends to all forms of non-rationalized order and attempts to spatialize and mechanize the city into predictable, bounded space and time. As an extension of romantic scientism, de-politicized car-ways and suburbs were the preferred material expression of this separative ideology, *sans raison*. The "perfect ideal" evoked by city improvers was a way to draw in capital and to engage the city into a productivist discourse. Under this umbrella, production is survival, expansion is life.

Transportation planning has accepted the bio-mechanical dualism to such a point that mobility seems to have become an end in itself and formed the base of a techno-bureaucratic understanding of transportation. As efficiency guru Ralph Torrie contends that "We've made mobility into some kind of icon," (McKay, 2001: A8)

where mobility is valued for mobility's sake without questioning why additional road capacity is being built. The recondite blindness is no surprise to Flink (1975: 183) who sees the urban as an auto-centered lifestyle embodying the central values of material prosperity and progress "through an unlimited consumption and production of consumer goods, and the fusing of rural and urban advantages in a suburban Utopia.." Early efforts to re-distribute population and industry helped form an attachment to the Garden City ideal which continues to orient radical suburban romanticism. The masked separation of function is reified in the ordered reconnection between nature and city in a time/space condition of the Garden City: an ideal accepted by the City of Ottawa.

Commissioning Ottawa's Parkway Modernization

The histor(y)city of Ottawa is one that espouses the achievement of a "perfect ideal" through the extensive, universal, and definitive planning of space; it shows, as Mick Smith (2001) argues, that space is "ideology in action." Situated within a layered interplay between the local, regional, provincial, and national, the locale of the City of Ottawa, in all its numerous spatial identities has, over time, been the subject of a variety of commissioned "modernization" studies.²⁴ Following the continental trend towards a regional motif of comprehensive planning, in particular those specific to political capitals, a successive lineage of semi-public agencies officiated urban renewal within the Ottawa Valley region. In an effort to create and

²⁴ Amongst the layers of overview and oversight, a string of quasi-independent district commissions set up to study and implement planning reports have cumulated to form a regional identity for the National

build a “Nation’s Capital” worthy of world class status, figures from Todd (1903) to Gréber (1950), and the string of quasi-independent district commissions they represented have overseen totalizing measures to improve the health, welfare and beauty of the city.²⁵ In a manner particular to the national capital region of an emerging industrial state, and with the automobile age in mind, these pioneering studies set the tone for a modernization of the capital city in the elegant style of the imperial city: one committed to viaducts, radial highways and parkways to be built and overseen by some form of federal district commission. Although advocated as a non-ideological, technocratic exercise, Ottawa’s planning histor(y)city reflects similar North American trends in planning. As a special showcase, Ottawa has been the recipient of a Parkway Modernism expressed in the language of progress and order, ceremony and spectacle.

Early 20th century North American city landscape construction was particularly influenced by Haussmann’s Paris, in particular his boulevards. Paris and other European cities were employed as “a model to which civilization looks whenever the art of creating fine towns is in question” (Boyer, 1983: 44). A somewhat hurriedly appropriation of this knowledge was extended from Haussmann’s proto-typical model to the very different North American milieu. Devoid of the cultural background and extensive social learning that had gone into the building of these spaces, the expressway modernism employed in the early

Capital Region. Included in this lineage although are the pioneering studies by Todd in 1903, Holt in 1915 and Cauchon in 1922.

²⁵ Most of these studies focused on improving the physicality of the city rather than the social conditions of its citizens. The role of architecture in regulating citizens noted by Boyer (1993) and Wilson (1992) is well at play here. As the Gréber Report noted (1950): “...regrettable conditions do not arise from poverty but from lack of foresight and regulation resulting in blight and mis-use on the development of land”

construction and re-construction of maturing industrial cities accepted an ontological ultra-utilitarianism. By the end of the WWI, the Garden City town planning movement which had swept Britain reached North America under influence of Ebenezer Howard and Lewis Mumford (Risebero, 1997). The Garden City offered to create “new” modern, “efficient and prosperous”²⁶ city by proposing a rational development scheme separating work and home. Simultaneously promoting increased production, ensuring progress and constructing a stable physical and moral order, it promised to answer the concerns of various concerned civic voices (Boyer, 1983; Wilson, 1991; Berman, 1982). These imported ideas would slowly emigrate to Ottawa to become part of the vision accepted by Ottawa’s district commission.

Major cities, including national capitals, intent on demonstrating their economic might, cosmopolitan vibrancy and political importance, sought to express their world class status through grandiose physical infrastructure works. The federal government’s first full scale attempt to shape the city was undertaken by Garden City enthusiast Jacques Gréber between 1937 and 1939. Freshly relieved from his duty as principal planner for the 1937 Paris Exhibition (where a serendipitous meeting with Mackenzie-King landed him the contract), Gréber followed up on early studies by Todd, Holt and Cauchon and proposed an application of these imported Garden City visions onto the region’s “unspoiled spaces.” Abruptly interrupted by WWII, his early designs showed a clear preference for the style and vision of what Boyer calls a “hierarchical summation of economically related but autonomous functions” (Boyer, 1983) supported by the more humane, naturally harmonious Garden City regional framework. His departure would be short lived, he would return triumphant along

²⁶ See Gréber, (1950: 52).

with the war heroes, his medal the authority to finalize his design for Canada's National Capital.

As head of an adolescent nation just beyond a world war in which it demonstrated its independence through military success, the Mackenzie-King government revived the capitalization of Ottawa by re-contracting the familiar Jacques Gréber to complete his design for a "new" Capital City; this time as a commissioned monument to Second World War veterans. Nearing the end of his career, and dramatically his life, Mackenzie-King's dream for a city worthy of an international, independent, modern nation would fall in the hands of the now almost forgotten – everywhere except Ottawa it seems - Gréber. The French planner not only paid adequate homage to war-heroes, and toasted progress but he also managed to pay special tribute to that hero of expressway modernism: Le Corbusier. Although trained in the classical principles of the Garden City at Paris's famous École des Beaux-Arts, whose approach to architectural design is often deemed as contrary to Modernism and the Radial City, Gréber succeeded in marrying the principles of the Garden City to the Modern Movement's functionalism, what Gordon (2001: 57) calls "modernity clocked in Beaux-Arts representations."²⁷ He would combine the functionalism of modernism (efficiency, modernization) with the symbolism of romanticism (large public buildings, memorials, de-centralization).

Although Le Corbusier had adamantly denounced the suburban living of the Garden City as an inefficient use of space, Gréber's avoidance of theoretical solutions

²⁷ Gordon has compared his 1950 plan to the principles of the of the 1933 *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) Athens Charter and concluded that Gréber's Plan "conformed almost precisely" to their principles and that he "incorporated many modern planning elements: land use

allowed him to synthesize the dedicated auto-mobile corridors and open spaces of Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* with the segregated home, office and industrial areas of the Garden City. Consequently, Gréber completely embraced the functional expressway devoid of pedestrian life as a link between country and city, and between one separated function and another.²⁸ Ottawa's own garden variety ideal deployed the traditional growth discourses cross-sectioned with enclaves of green utopianism. Gréber's "Le Corbusier Lite" plan offered the National Capital its very own utopian expressway modernism in the image of the radial city; a city physically dominated by large arterial roadways, expanses of green spaces, wide processional boulevards, colossal public buildings and rational ordering for maximum unimpeded use of the efficient automobile. The crowded, congested, disordered city, Gréber argued (158) had not yet been organized into a well-ordered natural setting for the "attainment of wholesome living, work and environmental conditions." His optimistic rapprochement between modernism and the Garden City wanted to harness the natural attributes of Ottawa to shape it into a "harmonious balance of urban, rural and industrial life."

Written at time when the faith in the promise of the automobile was at its highest, Gréber's plan saw existing railway conditions as the fundamental problem blighting the city-scape, and proposed to replace rail ways with "new circulatory arteries and parkways" (Gréber: 160). In a familiar echo of Haussmann's enlightening circulatory, Gréber advocated a "release" of rail rights of way to allow for a "re-

segregation, expressways, decentralization, reduced densities, urban renewal, open space and the neighbourhood unit" (2001:57).

²⁸ To Jane Jacobs the melding of the seemingly antagonistic Garden City and Modern Movement is no surprise as they both advocated a grand scale replace and re-construct methodology.

organization” of traffic circulation providing the spaces for “a new system of main arteries and parkways” (160, 173). Consisting of a central core of finance and business, a periphery of isolated industrial subcenters, and a residential satellite hinterland, his city would be connected by an extensive highway, expressways and parkway network along these liberated railways (See Map 1). The hardwired planning of efficient road-way systems built on the “natural and scenic” vista building previously initiated by the Federal District Commission and melded to a massive highway system, his parkways would fuel the “basic frame of the system of community and neighbourhood units which will gradually, as and when necessary, form the extension of the present built up area” (173). The city was to be a living-ticking mechanism of smooth running automatic car-dominated movement into a symbol of modernity and perfect aesthetics.

In his complete vision for a Radial Garden City bounded by green spaces, pleasure driving constituted one of the main forms of recreation and helped form the identity of “green recreative city-zenship.” This modern escapism to the “other” of pure nature cleansed the resident from the impurities of urban life. As part of his massive highway and parkway system, Gréber called for the symbolic construction of a “grandiose entrance” in the east (for travellers coming into the Capital from Montreal and Cornwall), a parkway to Kingsmere, a western parkway on the shore of the Ottawa River and a cross-town parkway (which would become the Queensway). Parkways had been built by the Federal District Commission previous to Gréber’s heroic synthesis, yet none had followed so closely and systematically the steps of rational planning to offer a complete vision of the physical landscape. In the words of

Gréber, his plan would transform the city into “an objective reality: the living panorama of the Capital!” This massive expansion of the original parkways system was to be “radically separated yet organically linked to the countryside” (Wilson, 1991: 101), offering a pleasing, acculturating and curing view for all its citizens to enjoy. Gréber’s plan for the rational mastery of nature has imbedded into a passive city-zenship an acceptance of his green roadways as a tempered and aesthetically pleasing form of road-way expansionism.

Jacques Gréber’s proposed highway system (1950: 171)

The report has had a lasting impact on the planning approach of the NCC, on the physical imagery of the capital region as much as on the self-conception of its citizenry. Indeed, Gréber's "parkway manifesto" has reached a monumental status: sweeping vistas at the end of grandiose highway approaches which efficiently feed gawking citizens and tourists into the bio-mechanical heart of the city. Among the succession of reports, Jacques Gréber's 1950 *Plan for the National Capital* has mirrored the post-WWII adoption of an interventionist strategy towards the building and administration of transportation and communication networks. His vision has done justice to the ideology of car and suburb. Yet he managed to situate the Ottawa version within the natural setting of waterways and hillsides, national institutions and recreational parkways. The continued determination to build and expand new and existing parkways is an expression of the subjective attachment to his green utopian ideals which continue to capture the imagination of the Capital City.

Locating the Good in Nature and Home: The Spectacle of "Technically Beautiful" City-zenship

Since 1899, the NCC and its predecessors²⁹ have promoted an aggressive reproduction and reconfiguration of the City of Ottawa. The genealogical benchmark of this lineage, the 1950 Gréber Plan, included the creation of open spaces for "the

²⁹ The Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC) was set up in 1899 by Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier to build the "Washington of the North." In 1927, the Federal District Commission (FDC) took over the functions of the OIC.

rational exploitation of all elements of nature” and approved the expansive protection and re-development of large extents of parkland. As users and aesthetic posers, capital citizens auditioned and accepted the roles of both subjects and objects of recreative identity framed within these “civic spaces.” In their special role as ambassadors to tourists who visit the capital, the “good” national citizen is an essential player in the spectacle of the “good” city. Showcasing beautiful spaces and polite demeanour as an example of picturesque Canadian landscape and moeurs, the physical and human identities intertwined with the local landscape were part of the local and national citizen-building exercise. For Gréber, constructing aesthetically pleasing citizens and landscapes was a symbiotic process. As he notes in his report (164) “If the protection and development of the gifts of nature in their totality have in the first place a utilitarian purpose, favourable to the maintenance of health and the physical enhancement and welfare of the inhabitants as also is the pleasure of tourists and visitors, they can be equally justified on the grounds of aesthetics, because the preservation of the natural beauty of a site is an inestimable asset towards increased joy of living and general prosperity.”

Through the utopian collage of Town and Country, proponents of the Garden City aimed to unite in action, metaphor and ontology the male (work – machine – mechanical) and female the (fertility – organic – biological) within urban space; their marriage the symbol for the reconciliation of Town and Country in which, as Wilson has described, “woman represented feeling, sexuality and even chaos; man was rationality and control” (1991: 87). As an active part of social shaping, the dualist configuration of home and work offered by the Garden City confined gendered roles

according to the physical placement of function within “the natural order” of the city. In a review of some of Gréber’s plans, Gournay (2001: 7) argues, the progressive relegation of middle-class woman to the “separate sphere” of the home created a new “gendered space of affluence (where) woman reigned over home life in the suburbs while their businessmen husbands met in downtown clubs.” Indeed the seemingly neutral physical environment of cities, and its nucleic suburbs made and continues to make “assumptions about the roles and the proper places for different categories of people... whether these categories are gender, age groups, castes, classes or ethnic groups. Our cities are patriarchy written in stone, brick, glass, and concrete” (Darke, 1996: 88).

The satellites of single family residences created as part of the “embourgeoisement” of city places not only rooted assumptions about gender roles in the “work” and “home” world but conceived of a harmonious connection between the male and female world. For Garden City enthusiasts, a perfect natural balance between the competitive and domestic worlds was found in the third (or green) spaces of the leisure-country-side. The arterial parkways and highways of Gréber’s bio-mechanic reproduction of the perfect natural order played a key role in the formation of spatial identity. As Gréber notes, “an essential complement to housing and to the complex activities of modern life is the systematic organization of open spaces” (1950: 163). His modernization molded utopian city-zenship along natural parkway corridors. While driving home from work, as much as in driving from home to leisure, the citizen was assured of a soothing natural experience. The “regenerative function” of open spaces (for all classes) was to be assured by providing urban open

spaces, wooded reserves and scenic drives. Set amongst inter-connected highways, “symmetrical families and solid citizens” were offered the “other” (female) consumerism of de-politicized “subtopia”³⁰ or the “other” (class-less and ungended) recreationalism in the vast clean open spaces of the Garden City. This “other” nature allowed citizens habituated to consuming rational circulation along the pavement of urban life to locate (but mostly to consume) spaces for perfect recreation beyond the mechanical objectivism of urban life. Parkway Modernization fashioned a distinct identity in nature, locating “good city-zenship” in the escapism of exotic spectacle located in far-off unspoiled spaces at terminal ends. The majestic vistas of parkways he proposed to extend would offer the perfect Galilean polarity between modern technology and natural spaces.

Since the city beautiful movement, parks have been about more than offering spaces for recreation, or opening up the city, or creating healthy nests to rear children. As city planners and improvers argued, the creation of green open spaces was integral to the architectural shaping of “good” city and “good” citizen. By opening up the city to allow it to breath, it allowed for a cleansing of pestilence and congestion with positive effect on dirty, downtrodden lower classes ,removing the “political and moral threat” (Wilson, 1991: 101) to “decent citizens.” This elitist equilateral functional aesthetic – the simultaneous building of better citizens and better city-spaces - has defined and been defined by visions of city of land distribution and allocation. A systematic organization of green spaces was as important “to health and welfare as rest and education”(Gréber, 1950; 163) as to pleasure roading. Thus, utilitarian land construction as a means to better the city – and in turn the citizen – has continued to

³⁰ Nairn was critical of the Garden City and dubbed them “subtopia’s”

shape and mold the spaces of urban life, much as radial park and parkway development, in many cases initiated by regional authorities of state commissions, was initiated to decongest the central city and pierce light into “urban slums.” These pleasure grounds have been synonymous with a more democratic, more artistic, more instructed citizen. Garden City enthusiasts saw these green spaces as helping constitute “a happier people, a better citizen, democratically instructed and more artistic in mind and spirit who would arise from this beautiful and ceremonial American City” (Boyer, 1983). Ottawa’s residents draw on this histor(y)city to fit its active process of identity formation. In the case of local contestations, leisure has exfoliated the means of participation in civic life.

Denizens of the area, of the short and long term variety, have formed an immense pride and unity in and around the lush green-spaces, abundant waterways and unclogged recreational spaces, conceived in this plan: in this matter the NCC was a crowning success.³¹ By indulging in politically and morally non-threatening recreation, denizens of the National Capital Region actively live out their green recreative city-zenship and embrace the healthy spectacle that Gréber argued was necessary for a fulfillment of the region’s potential as container of city-zenship and showcase for national pride and unity. The national tourist spectacle imagined by Gréber and continually advocated by the NCC has been expressed, and sometimes ardently defended, by these green citizens who are part of the spectacles’ cast.

This myth of “Ottawa the beautiful” not only captured the city-zenship, it has been catapulted into officialdom. The NCC continues to work on projects which

³¹ The romanticism of the fur trade and lumber industry, of *coureurs de bois* and lumberjacks surely contributes to the mythologizing of Ottawa as having a productive and beautiful identity.

promise green places and an opening up of civic spaces.³² Not surprisingly, the NCC is not the only organization carrying Gréber's torch, nor is it the main vessel for action as far as citizens of Ottawa are concerned. The symbolism of natural serenity initiated by the extensive federal shaping of the capital has carried through from Ottawa's first industrial function as a valley town and country dedicated to the "drawing of water and hewing of wood" to the updated model of post-industrial production set amongst the pristine Ottawa Valley. Most recently during the high-tech hype of the 1990's, Ottawa's private-public business boosters recognized the need to construct and maintain the image of a green techno-polity to attract high-quality knowledge workforces and to locate "Silicon Valley North" as a major entrepreneurial centre engaged in the design, distribution and production of newly formed commodities. The promotion of "green high tech" civic identity surfaced during the recent controversy over a possible "branding" of the city (Hunt, 2001).³³ In tribute and testament to its high-techness, and the availability of vast open spaces, Ottawa's OCRI, the now since morphed public-private partnership charged with promotion and development of the local high-tech community proposed what it thought was a appropriate by-line to the city image: "Ottawa: Technically Beautiful." This green technically beautiful city imagery fit perfectly with the flexible organicism

³² Current projects include a tourist oriented park on Victoria Island (a type of Granville Island East), a new park on the Scott Paper Mill site in Hull (unsightly and disorderly its whitish plume is not fit for a capital!), a commons in front of the new colossal war museum and a Square to frame and open up a vista to Parliament Hill. Oddly, there is a striking similarity between the NCC's present projects as advocated by the current autocrat Marcel Beaudry, to those advocated by Gréber. In comparing these two, there seems to be no deviation from the 1950 program. The NCC continues to produce a steady program of vista reconstitution, tourist spectacle-ism and institutional gigantism.

³³ Hunt's doctoral Thesis "Constructing the Entrepreneurial City" is especially helpful in locating the local players charged with promoting Ottawa's high-tech vision and the relationship between local economic development and shifts in city governance.

analogous to high-tech community construction and the ingrained productive leisure identity of Gréber's ontology.³⁴

What this indicates is that the stimulation of "open spaces" exists not only in high-tech cyber-space lingo, or in Gréber's green utopianism, but has become a symbol synonymous with the de-hierarchized workplaces and "recreative city-zenship" of which, in myth or reality, the green high tech city has pursued as part of its development plan. In its latest digitized form, "green high tech" is being held up as the up-to-date model of community development and rational planning. The upper middle class knowledge workers attracted by high-tech production loved their leisure – and probably other people's leisure. Along with an updated practice of recreative city-zenship, the high intensity granola recreation events such as cycling, mountain climbing, canoeing, roller skating and skiing, this model of community development offered the most modern form of the late-industrial "good citizen": active, clean and productive and, most importantly, "high-tech." In Ottawa as in many other cities, this up-to-date model has been promoted as an environmentally benign industrial strategy analogous with open spaces for economic growth, city-zen emancipation and urban ecology.³⁵ This more mature, more modern, perhaps post-industrial, form of green recreative city-zenship has emerged as a symbol to and of present and future local residents. Ottawa's ideal type underpins both the city-zen and administrative view of the city spaces, as a result, the "old" and "new" industrialism of city planning frames what Ottawa has been, what it should become, and how its spaces should be used, in

³⁴ Moreover, borrowing from the mid-southern US rust belt cities, the "New" City of Ottawa has begun to promote the idea of "Smart Growth" (SG). SG promises to question assumptions about urban development, provide the tools to manage growth and to refocus planning initiatives on quality of life issues.

short what the city of Ottawa landscape means. In the period between the high-tech auto and the high tech digital models of community development, the idea of green recreative city-zenship has embedded itself within a full range of de- or re-politicized degrees of city-zenship. The Garden City has invoked a number of identities unforeseen by rational planners. Fixed in the modernity of the bio-mechanical order the most significant aspects of this multiplicity of identities plays out in the planning and citizen reactions to projects, as well as in the city-zen contestations and administrative resistance to their concerns. The constructed green recreative identity drawn from Gréber has produced spaces for contestation in and around the parks, parkways and reserved lands of the Plan. This green identity plays itself out as much against the NCC as in support of it.

Despite extensive efforts by OCRI and the NCC to cast Ottawa's residents in roles and to promote an a-political high-tech green recreative city-zenship, residents have exercised and emphasized at various times the "political" city-zenship urges of their mixed identity. As the debate over the tagline—unceremoniously dropped due to public resistance- and recent NCC projects – always controversial—seems to demonstrate an active city-zenship that critically questions the legitimacy of Ottawa as a tourist and technological spectacle.

Majestic gestures offered by de-politicized bodies have been vociferously rejected by the constituency of Ottawa, and opposition to NCC projects has brought to light a committed constituency which maintained and cultivated an identity beyond the docility of rational city-zenship. For some residents, top-down utopian physical rearrangements neglect their lived-lives and car-jack their civic places in the interest

³⁵ Ottawa has aggressively promoted the "quality of life" of its green techno-polity to potential recruits.

of spectacle. Measurement remains the main tool for planners to establish the justification and need for road-expansion, and continues to be the methods used to explain complex problems despite its inability to deal with uncertainty. The next chapter turns to the specific case of the Alta Vista Parkway as an example of the narrow understanding of congestion problems and of the re-production of “good” Garden City identities within the intersection of planning practices and local spaces. Specifically, it will refer to the “crisis of rationality” attached to the strict empirical and temporal quantifications used in traffic assessment, and of the exposure of “irrational planning” cultural rationality can begin to offer.

CHAPTER III – A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NOW: THE ALTA VISTA PARKWAY

“The diverse and opposing strategies of industrial and financial capital, small business and trade groups, professional concerns and middle-class outrages formed a network across which the power of capital was intricately webbed. Planning documents became the mode through which these contradictions found physical and idealistic resolution; they represented discourses of constraint that selected and organized the material according to implicit control.”

Christine Boyer, 1983 (67)

A. Planning Auto-Modernization

Locating the Alta Vista Parkway

As early as 1966, an automobile corridor had been planned to service the arterial needs of the Ottawa’s Southeast quadrant and to provide area residents with direct access to the downtown as well as the city’s limited one-way east-west expressway. Since its high modernity beginnings, the Alta Vista Parkway (AVP) has lived through a number of incarnations including the current updated nomenclature of the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor (AVTC).³⁶ At its southernmost extremity the AVP would connect with a major suburban collector roadway (Conroy Road). It would then continue north through the “Alta Vista Corridor” past Riverside Drive and across the Rideau River to join up at the busy downtown Nicholas/Queensway interchange. Once completed the roadway would forge a linear path from the Southeast sector to Ottawa’s urban highway network and feed another estimated 30,000 vehicles per day into the downtown city core. The project could also potentially include major interchanges, expanded Queensway collector lanes and

³⁶ Perhaps local activist and Old Ottawa East Community Association member Pierre Johnson characterization of the roadway as the “Alta Vista Parkway/ Expressway/ Highway/ Transitway/ Roadway” (Summer 2000, Mainstreeter) is the most accurate description of the proposed transportation link.

build new connector arterials (Main Streeter, Spring 2001:4). In full, the AVP and associated road-way 'improvements' could significantly alter the pattern of movement for the entire city.

The proposed Alta Vista Transportation Corridor (2001)

Despite variations in name, length, girth, direction and rationale, the proposed corridor would collide with a number of residential communities, community gardens and local parks located in its long-ago reserved space. The history of old and new, accepted and abandoned road-way proposals through this area could constitute on its own, a turbulent story of planning and protest, of conflicts between justified planning and resident rejection, whether told by the concerned citizens of Canterbury, Alta Vista, Riverview Park or Faircrest Heights through which the corridor runs, or the downtown residents of Old Ottawa East and Sandy Hill who have long borne a disproportionate share of downstream traffic. The stories of these residents would surely be revelatory of the dynamics of urban planning. Yet, this story would be a very different one than the mini-Faustian tale of rational modernist parkway planning than will be told in this chapter.

Rather than telling the story of the corridor in a complete form, or relating the story of each of these communities, this chapter will relate parts of the ongoing Alta Vista saga as a symbol of urban capitalism's contradictions, along the way exposing "deficiencies" in transportation thinking. Following the methodology set out in the introduction, this chapter will use a "fragmentary historiography." In particular, this brief history of the parkway will focus on events between 2000 and 2002. This time-period is significant for two reasons. First, it overlaps the transition from the "old" Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) to the "new" amalgamated City of Ottawa. Second, the AVP Environmental Assessment (AVP/EA) is being initiated at a time when the City of Ottawa has committed itself to the principle of "smart growth."

As the AVP narrative will show, despite allusion to a “smart city” direction, and an appeal to flexible post-industrial imagination, such as the recent 20/20 vision, the bricks-and-mortar building practices worship Parkway Modernization. Viewing the south east sector transportation “problem” with a bird’s eye view, the technocratic “solution” to arrested circulation proposes to apply revamped “old school” tactics within the “new school” policy vision. Administrative practices have not adapted to the ideal-type vision promoted by the upper echelons of city politics through the 20/20 vision. The incongruity between the present-day material manifestations of administrative practices and policy vision points to the narrow spaces for progressive action within technically rational transportation realms. The opening offered by the “smart city” vision is closed off by the teleological faith in technocratic practices. Ottawa has shown little success in following a green counter-imaginary.

The process of building the problem of congestion is defined and mediated through professional experience. In revealing the persistent one-way modernism that drives road-discourse, it is useful to look at the specific methods employed by third party consultants (i.e. private firms or public-private partnerships). This section will first look at the assumptions underpinning the Alta Vista transportation studies, with particular attention to the definition of the “problem” of congestion clouded in scientific verification and validation. It will then turn to the recommendations contained in these studies to show *why* community groups can be so angered by the *who* is providing the expert knowledge. Lastly, it will examine the administrative and cultural responses to these assumptions and recommendations.

The Irrational Histor(y)city of Traffic Planning Solutions

Transportation planning has long been perceived as a technocratic exercise engaged in the “manipulation of the congestion problem” through the implementation of technical “solutions” such as street-widening, traffic regulation and new artery construction (along with other more precise technological fixes such as high occupancy vehicle lanes and controlled access roads). As Mitroff (1978) warns, problems such as pollution, field research and ethics are “ill-structured” problems for which there can be no consensual agreement. As an ill-structured problem, transportation is susceptible to “errors of a third kind” in which it is highly probable that the “wrong problem,” rather than the “right” problem, will be solved. Through this lens it could be argued that planners who see traffic as a problem to be solved with arterial extensions and expansions fail to see past their “most cherished assumptions about a problem” (Mitroff, 1978).³⁷ Not only is the problem of transportation fixated within this narrow econo-mechanistic paradigm, but as Klodawsky and Andrew (1999) charge, the “internal organization (of municipal governance) further separates the social from the physical.” It considers, for example, street building separate from issues of urban sprawl. This sectoral or vertical silo approach to planning considers issues mainly within each department’s expert domain.

Critical urbanists, including greens, argue that many if not most of the “causes” of congestion are rooted in the enclosure practices and procedures of traffic

³⁷ Mitroff (1978) notes that the only way to get away from type III errors is to “systematically confront your most cherished assumptions about a problem”

planning. Caught in the veil of expertise of how traffic works, planners obfuscate the interconnectedness of civic issues. Traditional traffic planning operates under the assumption that “decision making can be effectively rationalized” (Fisher, 2000: 4), which in practice means that traffic is an engineering problem to be solved with measurement and an engineered management plan based upon these measured numbers. Set under such parameters transportation policy is one of movement, a physical-economic phenomena. Yet congestion is “often the result of no visible problem” (Allen, 1991), and human behaviour variable, and conditional to a host of intangible factors.

To recall Dryzek (1987), human knowledge of complex systems, both the life world and the systems world, is incomplete. Consequently what Magnusson (1988) calls the “Galilean” order disputes the green understanding of complexity. As greens have charged, administrative knowledge is especially limited and inadequate to address complex problems, not to mention the ill-structured problem of traffic. Beginning with descriptive measures such as volume-to-capacity ratios, cause and effect scenarios and future traffic generation, and extending to pre-selected solution models, the technical rationality of traffic planning orients transportation debates around a specialized language. This exclusionary discourse provides an intellectual as well as a procedural barrier to popular participation; the real foundations of transportation ‘deficiencies’ are hidden behind this myriad of expert calculations. Ever since his groundbreaking work on soft-energy paths, renowned renegade engineer Amory Lovins has made a career of poking holes in the comic folly of his profession and the unimaginative impulses which drive its paradigm. Especially

critical of the role of “expertise” in shaping the acceptable solutions, Lovins’ (1977) warning that “too much expertise tends to obscure rather than illuminate the basic questions at hand” applies as much to transportation as to energy policy.

The enlightened pinnacle of the tower of knowledge, the “camera obscura,”³⁸ positioned a prominent bird’s eye view onto the knowable city beneath, to lead in from darkness and obscurity a more evolved state of development. Despite the adoption of the Master Plan as a document drawing together the various parts of numerous specialists, regional planning remained a professional domain, a two dimensional geometry closed off to human scaled action. Rather than expand the scope of planning, the increasingly complex hierarchical order of administration marked the transition between “a multidisciplinary urbanism” and a “newly and more narrowly professionalized discipline and practice”(Mercer, 1990: 217).

Like the watchman working on their clocks, from a bird’s eye view, traffic planners continuously tweak the gears of roadways, re-grease the capacities of corridors and adjust the timing of interchanges to solve the “congestion problem.” Their ultimate goal is to have them run on time and without delay. For many urban centers this is an endless game of catch-up, of maintaining and meeting the time and space demands of traffic, of which the problem definition and solutions is *l’affaire* of technocratic expertise. Particularly, the details of road-way improvements—lane, bridge and exchange construction—based largely on technical criteria—the exclusive domain of engineers and road contractors. Justified under the need to promote

³⁸ Geddes prototypical “outlook tower” built in Edinburgh as “the world’s first sociological laboratory” was at “once the repository of knowledge for the city, region and the world and a culture power house” (Mercer, 1990:212). This tower had above the collection of specialized levels for these various functions: a “camera obscura” to observe with the eye parish, city, region and nation.

economic growth and reduce the costs of traffic delays, road discourse depends on the “social construction of a seemingly rational process” (Coughlin, 1989). Legions of studies based on “projected travel demand” have proposed constructing new capacity to clear congestion problems.³⁹ The use of technical data, the deliberate selection of exclusionary language, and the development of technical measures to support claims of rationality obscures the political agenda, and social impact of road discourse.

The discourse of rational, comprehensive and scientifically administered planning is best articulated in the abstracted language of the city plan and city planning documents. Written in the inaccessible language of scientism, the contradictions of the street, and larger level discourses of linear order and production are compiled, albeit cryptically within the confines of these documents as a geometrical relationship set in time and space.

In *One Way Street*, Walter Benjamin noted the significance, and the relationship between perspective and text in landscape and terrain. As he notes; “The power of a country road is different when one is walking along it from when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way the power of a text is different when it is read than when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he who walks the road on foot learns the power it commands.....”(Benjamin, 1979: 50). Understanding the city means first

³⁹ With little success in achieving this goal. Almost every major road development in North America has shown that an expansion of the road capacity does not relieve traffic congestion. As Newman and Kenworthy (1992, 1996) have shown in their comparative study of transportation patterns in 32 major urban centers, new roadways almost always increase traffic flows, total km traveled, local air and water pollution, maintenance costs, city expenditures, suburban sprawl, transit use and decrease property values, the available land base, and the attractiveness of the city to its citizens and to potential

understanding how the “problem” has been framed around the “old” and “new” discourses of Parkway Modernism in the NCR. Looking through planning documents with a “mole’s eye” view, and seeing how expert lenses have viewed congestion, this chapter serves to unravel the “crisis of rationality” inherent to technical rationality.

“Arrested Circulation” ?

The Alta Vista Corridor has been incorporated in municipal plans since 1966 and included as part of the official regional plan since 1974 (Statement of Work, March 2001: CCA, 2001). Reconfirmed in 1997 as part of the Official Plan (OP) and Transportation Master Plan (TMP) of the “old” Regional Council, the transportation corridor has been legitimized as part of a larger rational planning progression, the logical follow up to years of previous studies and designs. Recently reincarnated as part of the City of Ottawa’s transportation strategy the Parkway proposal has been justified as necessary for the fulfillment of local economic development. As City Council documents note: “the fundamental purpose of the AVP is to provide additional arterial capacity in the Southeast Sector of the City of Ottawa to serve the urban development that has been planned and implemented there” (Terms of Reference (draft), February 8th, 2001 and Statement of Work (draft), March 21 2001). As such, the entire purpose of the Parkway is to meet an anticipated need by correcting transportation “deficiencies in the south east sector which continue to escalate” (EA Information Bulletin, 2001). Administrative rationality holds that it is necessary, and indeed highly rational, for the City to provide and serve this future

citizens. Despite the short term traffic relief, municipal highways eventually clog up once more and

development. This tendency meets what observers have noted as the tendency of municipal governance to promote speculation, favour real-estate developers (Razin, 2000), and to orient itself towards “regulating, servicing and taxing our built environment” (Andrew, 1994). Often serving “developers and their allies” (Magnusson, 1994), instrumentalist planning - rather than liberating urban planning from “vested interests” - has institutionalized an expansionist auto-centered development paradigm. By framing the study as a self-contained “transportation problem,” and specifically as a dearth of road capacity, the discourse of road congestion exacerbates the engrained administrative practices of engineer-dominated infrastructure planning.

Since 1993 a host of reports have been conducted to define the “problems/needs” of the Southeast sector of Ottawa. Prepared by the City, the Region and contracted expert-consultants, each transportation report has underscored the dire need for a demand-driven transportation expansion in this quadrant of the city. Among these reports, the three most significant have been conducted by Delcan (the “who”) for the City. Having framed the demand and the supply options (the “what”) to the solution/problem framework, Delcan’s role in the performance is important both on the instrumental and discursive level.⁴⁰ Remembering Torgerson (1997), this “site of contestation” (the “where”) is a moment written in the documents of the event, showing how dissent is handled within policy professionalism. Since citizen contestation is a reaction “as much to who is talking as much to what is being said”

produce downstream consequences.

⁴⁰ The Alta Vista Drive/ Smyth Road Transportation Study (August, 2000), the Alta Vista Drive/ Smyth Road Existing Conditions Report (1994), the Alta Vista Drive/ Smyth Road Planning Study Final Plan (1996).

(Fisher, 1995: 197), city-zens have questioned within this site of contestation the role of Delcan (the who) as much as the roadway proposal itself (the what).

A transnational firm involved in the management of major projects, in architecture and in civil engineering, Delcan represents a “key actor” in the “set” of the transportation drama. Through its “expert” examination of the future of the area transportation network and, more specifically, by completing *The Alta Vista Drive/Smyth Road Transportation Study*,⁴¹ Delcan has delineated the details of projected transportation demand and site growth in the area.

Delcan was retained in early 2000 to “develop transportation cause and effect scenarios for all of the various development options”(Delcan, 2000). In a truly administratively rational fashion, the report looked at expanding health care facilities in the Alta Vista Drive/Smyth Road area, the phased development of the complex, as well as expansion surrounding communities, and concluded that, the “nodes” of the local network “are projected to continue to grow and generate more traffic.”⁴² Moreover, the consultants reviewed past traffic studies⁴³ performed by the city and other engineering consultants and recommended various widening, twinning, construction and extension of roads.⁴⁴ In their view, the associated economic growth would require a timely response from the relevant authorities. Since “additional road

⁴¹ Tabled in August 2000.

⁴² In a bizarre use of the terminology of the “smart growth” lexicon, Delcan applied buzz-words such as network and nodes. To support their argument for a roadway in the sector Delcan referred to the high-tech health and bio-tech as nodes needing road connections to the local network. As a “hardwired” infrastructure proponent, Delcan’s understanding of the city is decidedly different from a “software” approach to planning that would emphasize services.

⁴³ “The Study of Transportation Demands To and From the Southeast Sector (1993-1994) and the Alta Vista Smyth Planning Study (1996).

⁴⁴ Of seven suggestions only one dealt with non-road transportation, itself limited to a bus only road within the complex.

capacity has not been provided” implementation of a transportation strategy should “not be delayed unnecessarily” (Delcan, 2000).

Appealing to the collective wisdom of detailed traffic studies, the three key studies reflect a pressing need for a regional artery as the “hardware” to guide future development/redevelopment scenarios including the slated development of the six health care facilities located on the proposed auto-route. The growth of the life-sciences campus located at the end of Smyth near Riverside is stated and re-stated as a major “new” economy employment node requiring property servicing for this “global city” to protect and develop the potentiality of this site. As the story goes, the “enormous growth” of 30, 000 people (Center for Spatial Economics, 2001) and the provision of 110, 000 downtown jobs forecasted for the next decade “necessitates a new arterial” (The News Canterbury Edition, April 27, 2000) and strategic relief to service the future demand from the South East sector. The AVP promises to relieve the pressure of increased demand projected by the Delcan studies (1994, 1996 and 2000) and the Centre for Spatial Economics (2001).

Confirming the administration’s agreement with the conclusion of their hired-ringer, RMOH Head of Transportation Planning, Brandon Reid, responded to the 2000 Delcan report in this way, “The report does two things. It re-emphasizes the importance of the Alta Vista Parkway. It also emphasizes the need to proceed sooner than later” (The News Canterbury Edition, August 31, 2000). Infrastructure constraints, according to the argument, have imposed severe growing pains on the area. As an observer cynically noted in response to this rationale; “You can almost feel the pressure, like a toothache caused by a cavity” (Sewell, 2001). For local

residents, proponents of the AVP promised a reduction of overall traffic levels on their local streets, and specifically, to eliminate the rush-hour cut-through traffic that had been identified by area residents as a major safety and quality of life issue. Either way, it was claimed that the road-way would reduce traffic and timely liberate the local area from “arrested circulation.”

A major component of the study was an evaluation of existing conditions. In the language of expert-driven linear transportation planning, this entailed data collection of such things as intersection volumes, screenline counts, signal timing plans, road geometry and transit ridership. To consider all development options for the area, as well as to ensure that these projects not be delayed unnecessarily, the report analyzed the collected data to recommend “transportation network improvements.” In evaluating past RMOC planning documents, including the 1997 RMOC Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and merging these with past and updated travel demand studies, the consultant called for the construction of phase one of the Alta Vista Parkway to begin between Smyth Road and Riverside Dr. In particular, recommendation #7 (which would be the most contested of recommendations) stressed the urgency of undertaking this process. Recommendation #7 read as such, “To ensure the timely delivery of the section of the Alta Vista Parkway between Smyth Road and Riverside Drive (with links to the hospital road), and the ramps to the Southeast Transitway, appropriate funds need to be identified within the five year budget of the City of Ottawa to complete the Environmental Assessment Study of the Alta Vista Parkway between Conroy Road and the Queensway.” (Delcan, August 2000, Transportation and Transit Report, Feb 8th 2001). In this manner the road-ways

could serve the anticipated development and “accommodate a series of redevelopment plans” (Delcan, 1996) in particular of those employment nodes in the health/life sciences complex. But most importantly, the roadway would meet the demands of a growing population.

Borrowing heavily on the form and function of past studies, this report’s recommendations set the stage for the present round of road discourse in the Alta Vista Corridor. It is a key moment in the “contextual basis” of problem definition (Bosso, 1995). It imposes pressure on decision making bodies to undertake action and rationalizes raising the speed limit for the approval of new built environments. In the case of the AVP, the Delcan (2000) study stressed the immediate necessity of building new capacity to meet a numerically expanding demographic and traffic base. As such, the report recommended that a EA needed to be initiated immediately if time lines were to be respected.⁴⁵ City staff explicitly reinforced the administrative rationality of short time frames, and the imperative of delivery in stressing the necessity of the first phase of the AVP to be in place by the “end of the 10-year planning horizon”(Transportation and Transit Report, Feb 8th 2001). As the rationale is noted in a slew of documents, the new roadway will provide capacity for the new development included in the 1974 Official Plan.

⁴⁵ Bureaucratized rationality depends on short time frames in order for things to proceed in an orderly linear fashion.

Neo-Malthusian Traffic Planning

The first thing traffic engineers examined in Southeast Ottawa was the *a priori* existing traffic conditions through “computed projected traffic volumes”(Delcan, 2000:18). As a starting point, the study’s methodology was engaged in looking at the deficiencies in the existing transportation system through “efficient analysis platform.” This technically sophisticated method used a step-by-step computer projected incremental loading until area intersections “failed.” In other words the study would measure existing traffic volumes, add projected travel increases, then input these figures into their EXCEL spreadsheet. By loading existing roadways with estimated future demand, their software model could determine at which point “critical limits” of roadways were met. Based on existing knowledge of car and bus travel, “sound judgement” (to use the terms of the consultant) allowed for a determination of “the most appropriate set of trip generation rates.”⁴⁶ According to these estimates, there would be a 200% increase in traffic over a 10 year period in, around, to and from the health/life sciences complex.

The roadway suggestions based on these technical criterion enabled the third party consultant to suggest ways “to modify traffic distribution” in order to target relief to those intersections operating poorly, and to redirect traffic to other corridors.⁴⁷ The highly structured analysis of traffic planning followed a particular

⁴⁶ The technical jargon used by this methodology is quite extensive. On top of these other terms the report notes that trips were verified using “first principle calculations,” ensuring the measures were accurate. Of course many of these assumptions are easily disputed by a host of studies that demonstrate the unpredictability of travel behaviour, especially when new roadways are build.

⁴⁷ This frame of thinking lacks a understanding of the complexity of systems, and echoes the mechanistic view of cities, by fixing one part, the others will be unaffected and continue to run smooth. Moreover, it assumes people’s behaviour will change in a logical way i.e. people will use roads to get

form of logic conducive to the Newtonian conception of time and space, and to the ordered world of rational, sentient beings which input information, compute available options and output the most efficient behaviour pattern. Set in a logic⁴⁸ of dualisms to be measured forecasted, and determined in quantitative terms, the assumptions and recommendations of the Delcan study follow the imperatives of the *Traffic Engineers Handbook*. For example, the traffic study relied heavily on volume-to-capacity (v/c) and level-of-service (LoS) measurements computed through existing peak hour traffic volumes. This quantitative measurement of existing conditions provided the framework from which to establish existing deficiencies, future transportation demand and ultimately to ascertain the nature, breath and character of future infrastructure needs. Defining transportation problems as an arithmetic function of the number of vehicles over a given patch of asphalt, or in this case of anticipated wheels on a planned corridor, this process forms a major component of property servicing functions of municipal government.

Restricting the debate to a questions LoS's and v/c's obscured the time-specific assumptions of the model. As one observer has noted, "even if the calculation of benefits rested on empirical data scientifically derived and analyzed, the calculation would reflect only the public values existing at a given moment in time and would not reflect the fact that values may shift mercurially" (Lovins, 1977: 940).⁴⁹ The use of such precise measurements by experts, rather than ensure accuracy

from A to B on the shortest route possible to maximize utility of scarce roadway. It ignores evidence to the contrary: that road expansion increases overall road-use. To think it green terms, it disconnects the part from the whole.

⁴⁸ The Delcan (2001) study noted: "The proposed AVP is the *logical* extension to the Conroy Road corridor upgrade, which was completed in 1999." (Emphasis added).

⁴⁹ Address by Green (1976), A Skeptical View of the Proposed Science Court 8-9, quoted in Lovins, (1977:940).

has much the opposite effect and “tends to obscure the task at hand” (Lovins, 1975).

In Lovins’ understanding, the micro-choices of such behavioural modeling reflects the values of the evaluator.⁵⁰

Equally critical of the clouded judgement provided by calculated behaviouralism, Cathorpe remarks on the anachronism of one-way rush-hour commuter discourse, “...we are still building WWII suburbs as if families were large and had only one breadwinner, as if all jobs were downtown, as if land and energy were endless and as if another lane on the freeway would end congestion” (1989). As Ralph Torrie contends, not only has traffic planning viewed mobility in isolation, but planners have misplaced both the time and object of transportation engineering. As he states: “The whole thrust of transportation planning for the last 50 years has been to support rush hour. The data they collect, the analytical methods they use, the planning philosophy they apply, is all geared toward meeting the peak demand for traffic space on the roads in the morning and at the end of the day... The way people move now has got ahead of the system built to support it. It’s all geared towards meeting the patterns of the past” (McKay, 2001: A8). This simple cause and effect linear equation indulges in the safe realm of justifiable expertise that substitutes methodology with the methods of scientism. The determination of cause and effect is one made by the consultants upon the immediate assumption that growth will necessarily and

⁵⁰ The Open House hosted by Delcan and the City in September 2002 provided a visual reminder of technical obscurity. Held at a local community center the consultants installed wall-to-wall-to-wall charts depicting the details of such things as process, projected noise levels and existing traffic volumes. As a large package of information it seemed thorough at first glance. Yet, as one observer noted, most of the information was empty of meaning, with terms and conditions loosely or undefined. The sheer volume was enough to confuse and overwhelm even the most involved participant. It demonstrates many of Plough and Krinsky’s critiques and confirms Lovins statement that “too many experts tend to obscure the task at hand.”

invariably entail rush-hour traffic expansion and that the Parkway will direct traffic away from the communities and not into them.

Traffic planning, such as the present case, epitomizes the means-ends blindness of caught-in-the-headlights econo-engineering. Continued expansion of the road network is in many cases justified by the scientifically self-sustaining and self-referential logic of expected demand and increased traffic volumes. A glimpse of this administrative rationality has already shone through the short history of the parkway. The very language of time, growth and rationality constitutes a process sustaining and supporting the administrative boosterism of urban industrialization. Indeed, neo-Malthusian traffic planning plays an essential role in the traditional growth perspective of city planning.

The traffic studies led by Delcan use the same closed procedure: normative judgements clouded in scientific verification and validation exclusive of genuine citizen input. At no point in any of these studies is the “need” revisited, or the driving forces of this need examined. Even as a “smart city,” Ottawa’s traffic planning remains oriented towards the forecasting of travel demand, and meeting the continuous need to build and construct. Assessment of need based simply on a extension of present uses ignores the values that such a process of examination sets in. In the words of Coughlin those values “reflect material prosperity and progress through unlimited production and consumption, and the fusing of the rural and urban advantages in a suburban utopia” (Coughlin, 1994:140). Harvey (1998:26) is more definitive in his criticism of the current techno-information paradigm and the inherent values it projects when he notes that, “For all its inner diversity, some sort of

hegemonic economistic-engineering discourse has come to dominate discussion of environmental questions, commodifying everything and subjecting almost all transactions to the singular logic of profitability and cost-benefit calculus.”

Critical scholars, including Coughlin (1994) have noted that even rigorous, well framed examinations of present and future needs largely ignore “the nature of the problem” and orient solutions to one of capacity adjustment rather than demand management. By providing “technical answers designed to bring political discussions to an end” (Fisher, 1996:200), transportation planning cannot unclog the “arrested circulation” that cements the tragedy of their concrete commons. Traditional traffic planning, as greens and critical urbanists argue, by-passes the issue and reduces complex political questions to technical ones.

B. Administrative and Cultural Responses

Reluctant Incrementalism

The Alta Vista Parkway, the latent vision of expressway modernism relegated to the City of Ottawa has activated city-zens to shout into the streets of Southeast Ottawa. Despite promising to extend many of the treats of a radial city, easy access to the city centre, beautiful vistas and access to the outer limits, engaged city-zens have asked questions about the meaning and purpose of extending the parkway vision.

Citizen groups have stood at the intersection of third party boosterism and administrative rationality and pushed on the pedestrian-crosswalk button. In a attempt to get to the transit station, city-zens that contest the narrow frame of neo-Malthusian

traffic planning have prompted their elected representatives to stall the incremental instrumentalism of the AVP process. In an effort to open up the foreclosed spaces of the vertical silo, concerned city-zens have urged planners to listen to their cultural rationality. It is significant to note that openings do exist. Transportation planning is not entirely captured by a monolithic administrative mind. As Leo (1994) argues, traffic planners are subject to political pressure and will sometimes, depending on circumstances, react to this pressure. At various points deliberate and significant efforts have been made by municipal planners, officials and third party consultants to include lay views inside the planning process. Even the most restrictive administration is able to adapt (Torgerson and Paehlke, 1990), albeit in this case their willingness to act has been limited by the restrictive aspects of the administrative mind.

From the initial stages of the transportation corridor's millennial re-appearance to the most recent changes in the AVTC Environmental Assessment (AVTC/EA), the incrementalist transportation planning trajectory shows evidence of listening, and sometimes reacting (most often reluctantly) to recalcitrant citizen groups. Within each specific stage of the Parkway's planning timeline, small pieces of the larger plan have been adapted to appease citizen contestation. In keeping with the mechanical model of solution frameworks, a reluctant incrementalism has allowed the project consultants to nominally meet objections while continuing to move the major goals of the project forward. During this "back and go" process, the steps of contact, adaptability and consent mark the path of incrementalism. Not unlike Le Corbusier's removal of meddlesome pedestrians in the way of the limited-access expressway, the

planning methodology has techniques to order and contain civic life, and still meet their demands.

Immediately following the September 2000 Delcan report, local city-zens were concerned with which local environmental impacts would be studied as part of the EA of a possible road-way through the corridor. Weary after years of battling corridor proposals, community groups pressured their regional councillors to review the initial terms of reference to ensure that the AVP be studied as a “bus only” as well as the mixed “transit/vehicle route” as has originally been recommended by Delcan. This adjustment, to include the “bus only” option, would be the first of a series of changes in the AVP study frame; proof to the continued negotiated struggle between the political and administrative instruments of City Hall, and between the citizens of the locality and the administrators of the “global city.”

With this first small un-clogging, the 2000 Delcan recommendations which continue to orient the current EA were accepted on September 13th, 2000. Yet, this study framework would be shorter lived than Gréber’s initial work on the Master Plan. Along with a new year, and the new millenium (2001) the citizens of the Ottawa-Carleton region rang in the “New City of Ottawa” and with it a “New” City Council. The Transportation and Transit Committee (T&T) constituted from this new membership found it fit to revisit these terms of reference. Overruling staff recommendations in the February 8th, 2001 report to Transportation and Transit to accept the terms “as is,” the committee deferred decision on the terms of reference to consult with communities affected or potentially affected by the AVP. Six weeks later (after a community consultation in which a series of concerns were brought up by

various community members and organizations) alterations were made to the statement of work. Among these, the name of the proposed project was changed from Alta Vista Parkway to the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor (AVTC) to reflect the transit option and the evaluation expanded to include green house gas emissions. Moreover, during the process the “bus only” was changed further to a “bus/light rail only” option.

In this form, on April 4th 2001, the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment (AVTC/EA) Statement of Work was recommended by the committee for Council approval. Delcan was again contracted by the city (a fourth time on this subject), this time to undertake the design of the EA. Its focus would be on “revisiting north-south transportation demand” including an inventory of conditions and a needs assessment. The final Environmental Assessment Study skeleton presented by Delcan in the summer of 2001 proposed three open houses for public consultation to be spread out over the 18 months of the study. Along with a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meant to represent the community associations, the design finalized the terms for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a Committee of Special Advisors.

The Spectacle of Consultation

Still unsatisfied with the *who* and *what* of these terms, a vocal response from city-zen groups including the Citizens for Healthy Communities prompted the City/Delcan team to host a public meeting on December 12th, 2001 at the Hillcrest

High School Auditorium. At this point, the main concern was that selection of alternatives to a road-way were to be chosen without formal public consultation. In a packed auditorium, beefed up with private security guards, a determined exchange between vocal opponents of the AVP and the City/Consultant staff ensued; epitomizing the friction between the heated irrationality of NIMBYism and the cool collected rationality of administrative officials. To the casual observer what seemed of more significance than the content of the questions and answers was the seemingly determined attempt by various speakers to unseat and destabilize the resolute rationality of the officials on hand. It embodied that tension between the “bird’s eye view” of technical rationality and the “mole’s eye view” of cultural rationality, that confluence between citizens and planners, between perspectives on what and who matters, of competing epistemologies and ontologies reunited in the place in the street.

The hosts, in their notice for the meeting, encouraged residents to attend in order to understand “why this assessment was proceeding” (Public Meeting Notice). In their mind, the environmental assessment process, as well as the history of the corridor, were legitimate knowledges to be transmitted *to* the citizens. For city-zens who had been involved in present and past debates over this corridor, the approach used by the presenters resembled a form of patronizing “greenwash” (Karliner, 1997). They were being told what the history of their neighbourhood was, and how the experts understood past attempts to plan or build the Parkway. Citizens were also told how the process was inclusive of their input, how they could get involved and how the study was going to consider all the options.

The way they understood the history of the AVP, and what it meant to them was ignored. Moreover curiously no mention was made of problem definition, of the future impact on other arteries or of possible pressure to extend off and on ramps to other areas, and who was defining these, not to mention the values the “problem” definition underlined. It was as if the EA had been tailor-made to consider all their concerns; as if the AVP was an isolated space independent of past and present histories; this stretch of land unconnected and free of people. To the local residents, local traffic planning history had been ignored and excluded.

Faced with a decided lack of acknowledgement of the legitimacy of their citizen expertise, it became evident that neither their expertise nor their questioning of the framing of the problem was to be given any credibility. As the gathering wore on, the frustration, and the tone of the audience grew considerably stronger. For the unlucky professionals chosen to represent the City and Delcan, this was surely a lose-lose situation where deflection was the only possible approach. No wonder the hosts were notably short winded in their answers and tacitly vague on the request for more meetings of this sort.

This forum for airing of ideas was another example of reluctant incrementalism, a symbolic recognition of the demands of active city-zens. Despite its facade of consultation, it suggests that, faced with pressure, expertise can be called to face city-zen voices directly - but in a forum where they hold the balance of communicative power. This event is critical in understanding the AVP as a case study of the interaction between expertise and cultural rationality, of the uncommunicative meeting between the bird’s eye and mole’s eye view. This fateful community meeting

demonstrates the roles set into each actor's identity, and how their discourse and actions reflect their different ways of seeing. Before orienting the discussion towards cultural rationality, a view of the meaning of community consultation in the AVP process helps contrast the instrumentalist understanding of participation with more expansive understanding upheld by proponents of cultural rationality.

Whose Community Consultation?

Officially, within AVP planning procedures, public consultation has been explicitly mentioned in every document. Yet, the bird's eye view of consultation contained in these transportation studies upholds a very restricted understanding of consultation. In the Alta Vista Drive/Smyth Road Transportation Strategy (Delcan, August 2000) community involvement consisted of "review and subsequent modification" of the recommendations in Task 6 of a eight task study - the stage just before the preparation of the final report. Substantive community responses to the February 2001 Terms of Reference were also dealt with in a relatively dismissive fashion.⁵¹

While some of the physical-environmental issues were accepted, most other issues were deflected for further study or even rejected outright by the judge and jury third party techno-bureaucrats. Of those community concerns included in the EA frame, most were mainly "green" add-ons to a do-something approach, making the

⁵¹ Comments to the second terms of reference prepared for the EA fell broadly into four categories; physical-environmental (CHG, CO2, Noise, Vibration, Safety, Pollution and Greenspace), transportation planning (provide for demand management plan to be completed, exclusion of airport parkway twinning as part of study), consultation process (PAC members elect chair, independent

selection of the do-nothing approach highly unlikely. In the case of a nascent and ongoing City-led demand management plan, a delay of the EA to study the impact of this strategy was not to be directly allowed. It would be factored in only obtusely as part of the direction given by the Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan (OP/TMP). The orientation of these city wide Master Plan documents would only guide the AVP/EA process. Whereas for other areas, such as traffic demand, there were strict quantifiers of how other factors would be studied, no mention was made of how these larger documents would orient this micro-scale study. It is unclear how city-wide travel demand and road-way expansion would be considered. While all other factors were given “hard” measurement criteria, this aspect of the study remained curiously vague.

Community groups have been quite clear in their preference for expansive consultation⁵² and the inclusion socio-environmental issues such as fairness to be included within the weak EA process, yet, as with other measures that confront the smooth rolling of expansionism or perturb the timelines set out by the “efficient” expert-consul, these “non-essential” issues are “non-starters.” Essentially, the study design contained public consultation within toothless and powerless PACs. This consultative body would have no access to financial or human resources for independent study and would be chaired by a project manager imposed by Delcan. While indeed this is consultation, it leaves no room for independent study by the PAC, for it to question the basis of the report (linear progression), to suggest

resources for PAC to conduct studies), and study frame (downstream effect, evaluation criteria of alternatives).

alternative methodologies (non-quantitative study), to deliberate extensively (broader debate) or even to set the agenda and tone of the Public Advisory Committee's meetings. Moreover, timelines were imposed on the PAC and pressure was extended as council awaited PAC consultation before it received the report.⁵³ Most likely, the PACs will end up receiving some incrementalists rewards in exchange for expediting the process.⁵⁴

Community consultation can take many forms. In the case of the AVP, meetings consisted of one way communication—in form or in practice—with experts and lay expertise talking past each other, with little room for communicative rationality. The capacity to resist co-optation is significantly weakened and the ability to co-opt strengthened when consultants establish limits according to their understanding of process and form. This is particularly important for community groups participating in Public Advisory Committees. Consultants can curb spending, restrict access to information and retroactively contain the scope of studies to limit the ability of a PAC to do its work effectively. In brief if angered or if they need to respect their self-assessed time lines, consultants can suddenly revert to old administrative practices, or ignore the input of PACs in the final product altogether.

⁵² As Heather Humphries of the Ottawa East Community Association noted at the February 2001 T & T meeting, there was “an expressed interest from communities wanting to be involved in the drafting of the terms of reference.”

⁵³ Time lines are significant for PAC as the participants are un-paid volunteers without access to resources. When facing professionals such as Delcan's paid consultants this leaves them without the necessary time or resources to present a complete argument to the information presented to them. Furthermore, in many of these cases, the members of the PAC need to represent their members at large. Without adequate time allocation, they can be unable to talk to their members. This containment of “participation” is one example of the problematic posed by rushed and narrow consultation.

⁵⁴ While the various Delcan and City reports suggested stakeholder consultation had taken place, the definition of consultation was quite narrow. In each recommendation, the terms of reference were drafted first. Only then was consultation with community members undertaken and in several of these cases only because of persistent calls from community activists.

In the February community consultations, the Riverview Park Community Association asked that the TAC include an “expert without a vested interest in the project.” The staff response to this request was that “all of the consultants that will be considered are experts without vested interests” (March 21, 2001:24). No citizen seems to be assured by this statement of neutrality of the TAC which included a number of actors that would benefit directly from the construction of the AVP, and excluded those who would bare the external costs associated with the traffic that would accompany a “new” roadway. This is especially disconcerting since the consultant charged with setting the roles and responsibilities of these committees, Delcan, stands to collect new planning contracts specific to the preparation and building of the AVP if the project is a “go.” As a number of city-zens called out vociferously, Delcan is not trusted in the community nor is their supposed objectivity given any credibility. The past, present and future of cultural rationality sees vested interest in the *who* shaping the process.

Towards Cultural Rationality

The discourse of road-congestion has been a constant theme throughout modern urbanism, as much in Ottawa as in every other urban center. De-clogging “arrested circulation” for ease of movement has been the obsession of a large part of city design and infrastructure development. From Holt’s (1915) proposals for street widening and viaduct building to Gréber’s claim that “rational circulation of constantly increasing automobile traffic has yet to be organized,” planners have

maintained that they can order and direct traffic. Whether the solutions were traffic regulation, street widening or providing new arteries, the goal has been to channel traffic and contain traffic to provide relief and redistribution. Caught within the blinders of its instrumentalism, *this* administrative mind neither sees, nor hears the city call out from under the floor boards. Because the silent alienation is left unattended, many questions remain.

A top-down process of consultations controlled by the consultant is neither non-compartmentalized, open, decentralized, non-technical nor flexible (Paehlke and Torgerson, 1990). The weak understanding of consultation relies on reaction to information provided and is expert-led/citizen-react rather than citizen-led/expert-informed. By limiting ownership of the debate to the consultant and relegating citizens to reactors, the process has managed to co-opt the helpful parts of imaginative dissent. Through piecemeal divide and conquer techniques, it has acquired consent from those voices inside the process and retrieved the process as its own.

Throughout the process, public pressure has prompted third party consultants, city staff and councilors to revisit the rationale, both in the scope of the terms of the study and in the process of the EA. It indicates an extensive knowledge and awareness nurtured during years of involvement by Southeast Ottawa community that can call the administrative mind to expose itself on stage to the public. Moreover, it reinforces Leo's (1994) claim that administrative minds when faced with pressure will adapt, even if only in reluctant piecemeal ways. Still, the nominal inclusion of cultural rationality does little to slow-down the thrust of Parkway Modernization.

Community members remained outside active participation despite minor amendments to the process.

All evidence seems to suggest that through their application of limited-access methodologies the city and their consultant have demonstrated a deficiency in thinking which favours auto-expansionism and property servicing. Questions about the evaluation criteria will remain. For city planners this should be a cause for concern as future city-zen action could cloud over the entire legitimacy of the process. Indeed the question of “*who* directs?” is relevant to both political economy and green political thought. The rigidity of administrative function orients a process as one of reluctant incrementalism: a limited, prodding integration of citizen critiques, rather than a shaping from a city-zen perspective.

Citizens can adapt to processes to understand the evidence in technical terms, and to learn to use these technical details. Having a third party conduct the investigations can open up new opportunities to mold the process. Nevertheless, if the process is built on the same technocratic basis citizen input is severely limited. It is the city-zen voices from outside the process that offer the best “site of contestation” the “other” spaces built around the “good” citizen that provided the impetus for alternative policy visions.

Citizens are unable to alter the manner in which alternative forms of experience, knowledge and wisdom are legitimized or de-legitimized. Like all pedestrian buttons the response is slow and the route remains dangerous as motorists maintain the power differential. This street is set with pitfalls. How does technical rationality dampen the imaginative spirit of the city-zen-*flaneur*? And if city-zens are

to regain the street, how are their contestations outside of this restrictive process framed? To next chapter will look at the question of liberating political city-zenship, and how city-zens of Ottawa have managed to face the Leviathan.

CHAPTER IV- THE FACES OF STREET EXPERTISE

Acting Out Expertise

"It's only in the twentieth century that Faustian Development has come into its own. In the capitalist world it has emerged most vividly in the proliferation of "public authorities" and superagencies designed to organize immense construction projects, especially in transportation and energy: canals and railroads, bridges and highwaysthese authorities have brought about a "changing balance of public and private power"

Marshall Berman, 1982 (74-75)

The histor(y)city of Ottawa points to the application of technocratic rationality to the flow of goods, information, and people down "The" Capital's "Concrete Way." In the name of speed governance, the past and present of this locale's professionalized traffic engineering corps exhibits a persistent concern with greasing the flow of non-human traffic along the segregated and ordered conduits that new and old roadways form. Employing the input-output statistical model and following the commandments of the engineer's testament "The Traffic Engineers Handbook" (Jacobs, 2000),⁵⁵ an ideal codification of knowledge reduces the vibrancy of the street to a series of data measurements such as speed, volume and capacity. Thus, a narrow street imagination voiced in larger widths and faster speeds has resulted in an overabundance of limited access streets. The effect of traffic engineering on public places (and thus possibly on protests) has transcribed itself into a severe imbalance of carbon-power favouring the car. As Allan Jacobs concludes, "Motorized vehicles have been given the right to dominate streets and thereby dominate public space, while pedestrians and people using non-motorized vehicles have been significantly removed from the streets, thereby, from public space" (2001:92). Other forms of civic

⁵⁵ For a description of the importance of the Handbook in the design of streets and movement see Jacobs (2001: 90).

expression have been forced off the street as collective power has been taken away from residents and pedestrian users and the right-of-way to these public spaces allocated instead to those “who drive through it.” The symbolic and material deprivation of access to street life has allowed an exclusive allocation of street services to the efficient movement of toned metal machines.

Aware that this extreme power imbalance is sometimes challenged by NIMBYist “irrationally” contesting the injustice of “new” roads being built through their neighbourhood, techniques have been developed to help experts act out within the “good measure” given to their concerns. Like other administrative realms (such as risk management), transportation planning has focused on refining and standardizing techniques for public participation. In an effort to gain public acceptance, and to overcome potential conflicts and high-profile political battles with local communities, expert-communicators learned to deploy a number of tactics during assessment processes. Techniques such as hiding behind elected officials, appealing to “independent” authority, and educating or training the public to understand issues as the experts do (Plough and Krinsky, 1987) have led to a more narrow understanding of what participation means (Graham and Phillips, 1998). A combination of these expert-led strategies is currently being used in the ongoing AVP study to act-out in front of the public the functional competency and substantive legitimacy of each phase of the environmental assessment processes.

Veiled by the murky acting-out of citizen identities, the communicative nexus of professional and amateur expertise lies silently behind technical rationality. Fearful of a dramatic exposure to cultural rationality, protective of their domain and

ultra sensitive to the cruel judgement of non-practicing critics, it is rare for expert-consultants voluntarily to denude themselves from their systematic tools of logic. Most often, technocratic expertise reveals itself only tentatively and selectively in carefully construed forums such as public advisory committees (PACs). Seldom is the uneasy relationship between these realms given the translucency of the public information meeting held on December 12th, 2001 by the city and the consultants. Held as a result of determined action by the Citizens for Healthy Communities, the meeting's *guichet fermé* performance provides a *Rear Window*⁵⁶ into normally closed communicative expert-citizen heuristics. The high school auditorium provided an opportune locale for voyeurism into the confluence of technical expertise and cultural rationality. The evening's events provide a concrete example of the performative aspects of expertise, and the spectacular value of technical rationality.

The capacity audience present at the one-night only event witnessed a classic performance of the "phenomena of the event:"⁵⁷ a two act show of expertise meant to convey the rigors of expert knowledge. From curtain to curtain the performance was constituted to demonstrate the "thoroughness of expertise" into the presentation. In the first act, two noticeably nervous experts, one city representative playing "legitimacy" and one Delcan representative playing the well practiced lead role of "competency," set the stage. Faced with a large restless crowd the rehearsed script of this performance was acted-out by the lead player with clear intention to explain to

⁵⁶ Alfred Hitchcock's film portrayed an immobilized detective who looking from his apartment rear window became the neighbourhood's voyeur resident.

⁵⁷ This term is used by natural scientists to restrict an understanding of an event to the present observable. Plough and Krimsky use this term to critique the conventional understanding of risk communication which "neglects cultural themes, motivations and symbolic meanings." As they explain, the "phenomena of the event" is used in this context to portray the "show of expertise" as a symbolic act meant to convey the perception of expertise.

the public the process, history and necessity of the *Alta Vista Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment Study*.⁵⁸ Logical, linear, and rational, this well-crafted prose set the pace for the meeting. As the lead play-actor, Declan clearly delineated the parameters of subsequent acts and defined the antecedent histor(y)city of the parkway as understood by experts. The disciplined approach thus functioned as the “common ground” for a clearing out barriers such as “irrationality” or “incorrect knowledges” which communicators understand as blocking dialogue.

Despite extensive efforts to frame the meeting, the pit-mob showed wanton disrespect for the rehearsed-act by openly defying and disregarding the tone, pace and content of the meeting set out for them. Angered by the patronizing execution, the unruly crowd preferred to arrange their own script for the post-presentation comments and questions. Most of the questions posed by residents at this meeting engaged in dialogue that was strictly outside the parameters of the meeting’s agenda.

Expecting such a raucous reaction and well versed in the art of appeasement, the male-female team of experts employed to navigate the set-course either by-passed the questions, if in their estimation they addressed issues that fell outside the framework, or deflected them as already adequately represented inside the study. Questions of legitimacy and credibility were summarily rejected; the ethics of the consultant bidding on future AVP contracts cast aside. As the consultant’s representative noted, its ability and noble character had been tested and proven in past studies; its legitimacy rested strongly in past client’s satisfaction with their work. Questions of geographical scope, range and timing were equally spurned as unguided

⁵⁸ See Notice of Public Meeting, December 12th, 2001 “Why should you attend this meeting ?”

fears. Even direct questions on process such as one posed by a experienced assessor on faults within the current EA were brushed aside.

This unfolding drama of this second act consisted not only of frustrated audience members asking questions. Others needed to vent their anger, a few wanted to engage in dialogue and some felt ready to provide solutions. The non-reaction by the panel to the mood and spirit of the audience led a frustrated crowd to wonder what the purpose of this exercise was and what, in this forum constituted an acceptable question. The result of this encounter was another *double failure of representation*: an audience largely disappointed with the performance, and a set of players upset at an ungrateful response from the audience for which it had prepared a special presentation.

The ultimate end of the meeting reflects the limited frame given to the players and audience by the screenplay. Intended to fulfill the function of educating the public to think within the parameters of the study, the meeting was framed in the no-man's land between expertise and experience. The presenters provided just enough technical jargon to exclude discussion on a basic experiential level and conversely just enough effort was put into transmitting information on a general level so that the audience could not question some of the technical faults in process. In short, the worst of what Plough and Krinsky call the "technosphere" and "demosphere," rendered communication impossible. Indeed, if we follow Plough and Krinsky's argument, the failure of the event is not due to negligence or incompetence, or a deliberate shutting-out of the public but can be attributed to the professional concern with dampening enflamed passions, chilling public concerns and stifling fears in what Leisse calls "a

ritual of confidence and control” (1994). Employing the accepted standards of their profession, the experts fulfilled the symbolic act of disclosing their competency to the public. This mediated ritual is in Plough and Krinsky’s estimation the “real” goal of risk communication where the message is secondary to its role of demonstrating to the public; “Have faith; We are in Charge” (Plough and Krinsky, 1987:7). What undertones the performance is the faith in expertise the experts wish to convey to an “irrational” and “emotional” crowd. To play on Plough and Krinsky’s observation, the symbolic meaning of this specific performance conferred the message that; “We have progress and order under control and the relevant information gathering tools to get the job done. If you would like to participate we have some tools that need cleaning.”⁵⁹

While expert communication is intended to inform individuals and provide an intentional transfer of information, the message/product of this meeting was not the “information” proper, but rather served to symbolically channel “expertise” to a general audience (Plough and Krinsky, 1987). The intention (especially in a meeting forced upon them by city-zen groups) is not to engage in genuine dialogue with lay expertise. The meeting was intended only to fulfill that function of “educating the public” to think within the parameters of the study. Accompanied by specialized and sophisticated presentations, the real purpose of the communication was to parade under the veil of rationality.⁶⁰ The information meeting effectively functioned to communicate the rationality and logical consistency of the process, most noticeably

⁵⁹ This extension is based both on the Power Point notes of the meeting and the goals of the meeting as set out in the public notice sent out to residences in the area.

⁶⁰ The widely distributed Public Meeting Notice prepared by the city engineering staff tacitly implied that the public “needs” to be informed about the real issues and to understand the process.

the Terms of Reference that would “fulfill the Canadian and Ontario Environmental Assessment Acts” (Notice of Public Meeting, 2001). In the consultant’s view, they were fulfilling their legal responsibility by following the mandated law, inasmuch as, the Terms of Reference were more than an adequate execution of the required procedure.

Expert-communication often sees a non-convergence between experts and lay views as an inability to communicate their message, not as a sign that experts have separated themselves so far from the citizenry that “society is divided between those with and those without expertise” (Fisher, 2000:51). As such, by focusing on the message, expert-communicators remain completely oblivious to the point that city-zens are making; they have no faith in the process (the what) or the messenger (the who). The audience was telling the experts “We don’t have faith in you; We don’t trust your ability to communicate our needs; We’ve seen the results of your past studies; We know what this course of action will bring.” The experts responded by insisting their rigorous standards and well-tested procedures would more than adequately represent an aggregate of the community views and needs.

This “phenomena of event” put local democracy at odds with technical experts and exacerbated the conflict between these spheres (Plough and Krinsky, 1987). Acting out the green recreative identity mutated from NCC’s vision and engraved in the materiality of city landscape, the city-zens present at the meeting confronted the techno-bureaucratic rationality face-to-face; a convergence of roles which satisfied neither group. This failure could be attributed to the stubbornness of either party or to the unwavering rejection of each other’s rationality, but this

blockage could also be understood as a meeting of the different roles each the expert and the city-zens set out to perform, and of their perceptions of community consultation and the scope of civic politics. The staged expert-consultants and the seated citizens were speaking past each other as if actors and audience were sitting in different theaters. Locked into this medium, the performative politics rested in the passive person of the expert rather in the participatory popular based dance, and shrouded itself as de-politicized rationality. As it has been argued, this all-knowing econo- (or is that auto)-reductionism is a major concern to green political thought, as well as to political economists.

The “Horror” of Complete Knowledge: The Case of Ottawa and London

“Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see gain. Of, I wasn’t touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw in that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, or ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of despair, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath – “The Horror, The Horror”

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

So far the “horrible” performance of veiled practices has been shown to be a phenomenon that occludes the issues local residents outwardly, or inwardly want to discuss and resolve. This tendency to mediate life through “the steps and phases of the research process” (Fisher, 2000:42) manifests itself explicitly during the process of EA criteria selection. Like Conrad’s Kurtz, or Berman’s Faust, these “figures” of dark reason aim “to expand human powers through science and rationality” and as a

result “unleash demonic powers that erupt irrationally, beyond human control with horrifying results” (Berman, 1999:114).

Ted Schrecker’s (1996) study of the London, Ontario’s Transportation Plan Review (TPR) offers a rare political economy glimpse into the irrational underworld of rational traffic assessment. His analysis of the content and context of the study exposes road-building boosterism while simultaneously warning of the pitfalls involved with third party road consultation. Schrecker chooses to unveil the technorationality of London’s TPR not only, to borrow from Conrad, “because the method is unsound,”⁶¹ but he also focuses on the TPR of this mid-sized Canadian city because it is an brutal example of the what Fisher calls “value neutral ideology of expertise” (2000:38). The process and context he describes portrays a clear image of how the “supreme moment of complete knowledge” consumes transportation expertise and mobilizes it unsound ideas. It acts as an example of how the discursive dampening of imagination plays out in the material. Schrecker’s attention to the political economy of road discourse, and the shaping of its terrain reinforces Plough and Krinsky’s claim that the “who” has a substantial impact on the direction given to the consultation process.

The process and timing of the London study shows a startling similarity to the study currently being undertaken in the City of Ottawa. What may be most telling are the similarities in timing between the two studies conducted in each of these Ontario municipalities. First, London’s TPR was undertaken just after an expansion of the city limits had been provided by an annexation of surrounding townships. Second, the study was in part undertaken to plan for the use of large land holdings near the

region's largest hospital. Third, just as the AVP/EA is being undertaken immediately following a review of Ottawa's "20/20 Vision," London's TPR was conducted immediately following a citizen driven development – "Vision '96" - which made explicit commitments to environmental responsibility, increased density and improved mixed mode transportation. Each of these conditions, expansion of city limits, growth of health care facilities, and commitment to a new Official Plan oriented towards sustainable development, somewhat eerily, are present in both Ottawa and London.

Along with these similarities in timing, Ottawa and London share a likeness in the implementation of the assessment itself. As in Ottawa, public meetings were limited to a single two and a half hour introductory meeting. The short appearance of the actor-consultants resembles an attempted dress rehearsal of an "unveiling of rationality" to the skeptical public, to show how open and accessible the process can be. Yet, as with in the case of Ottawa, even in limited one-off forums such as public information meetings, views that fall outside the realm of knowledge are actively disregarded. Like their counterparts in Ottawa, the expert-consultant IMC Consulting Group Inc judged that public meetings tend to "bring out the same participatory individuals with self-selective biases" (Schrecker, 1996: 87). Therefore as a forum for consultation public meetings were perceived as rather "useless."

Ignoring the complex identities and preferences that can be communicated in open forums, the consultant preferred surveys, focus groups, and interest group meetings: those tools of public choice policy which give out quantitative responses and pump out tabulated certainties that project future behaviour. These public choice

⁶¹ As the manager speaks of Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (101).

methods tighten the grip of instrumental rationality over “irrational” musings of the un-credible population. Underpinned by the fundamental principles of choice “that thinking should precede action and should serve a purpose; that purpose should be defined in terms of a consistent set of pre-existent goals and that choice should be based on a consistent theory of the relation between action and its consequences,” (March, 1989: 81) the rationality of public choice provided their study with an “accurate” account of action consistent with behaviour.

The entire frame of the London study was based on projecting existing travel patterns into the future. In this technical matrix, no projections were made on an adjusted travel demand; any change in travel demand was excluded *a priori*; future trends were discounted by short time frames. In essence, responses to linear measurement both human (i.e. focus groups) and physical (i.e. traffic) micro-date, was judged sufficient to assuage the need for and justification of the project. Yet, such method presumes behavioural changes in predictable patterns according to assumed pre-existent purposes. For examples, it never accounts for radical, or even moderate, changes in behaviour associated with road-way extension. It has been shown that “new” capacity may in fact encourage people to drive more than they had expected simply because the road exists (Lovins, 1999). This people-blind methodology follows the positivist adaptation of physical sciences to social life that, much to the chagrin of progressive policy studies and to the detriment of the subjects of decisions, is oriented towards prediction and control more than critical reflection and democratic participation (Fisher, 1992).

The substantive manipulation of data enhanced the “choice” probability of an auto-expansionist travel plan. In what must be an ultimate perversion of environmental impact assessment, short-term congestion relief and increases in average travel speeds were included as an environmental benefits. On the negative side of the matrix, traffic calming or any measures that made auto-travel less convenient were assessed as an environmental cost under the rationale that fast and easy traffic is less polluting.

Consequently, the chosen indicators, or more specifically the way these indicators were represented in the matrix, discounted long-term impacts and provided a clear built-in bias for immediate expansion of current road-supply. By hiding social value judgements in the “neutral” language of the criteria selection, the activation of the scientific method by expert judgement elevated the technical over the political. Set up in this way, it is no surprise that the London transportation review discounted and subsequently rejected alternatives to auto-centered capacity adjustment such as traffic calming. In claiming that demand management created traffic-congestion,⁶² the consultant created a matrix that assured it with a Galilean win-win scenario.⁶³

From Schrecker’s analysis of the details of the transportation review, it appears that the “who” does indeed matter since a consultant’s criterion selection can “transcend — or at least circumvent — politics through expert judgment” (Fisher, 2000: 42). Without malice, or deliberate action, the simple “value-neutral”

⁶² In the report it noted that traffic demand management “should not be expected to solve traffic problems which originate outside the neighbourhood” (1996, 90). On the basis of this rationale the consultants reject this policy approach as a possible solution to traffic congestion.

⁶³ A reduction in traffic speeds meant increased emission and an increase in capacity meant higher traffic speeds and lower pollution: both factors pointed *a priori* to a green light for driving-on with the roadway. The matrix was unable to compute a simultaneous increase in pollution and traffic speeds

application of method in itself excludes normative questions from the problem/solution framework. In the London study significant political or equity based questions were not asked. For example: Whose travel is considered important? What are the long-term impacts of building more roads? Is improved access to a city's downtown compatible with livable, mixed-use central cores? Who will be most negatively affected by these changes in urban landscape? Who bears a disproportionate share of the socio-environmental costs of this project? How do transit captives benefit from the new transportation plan? These questions remained outside the terms of reference of the report.

Schrecker's caution about the built-in road-way expansionism of third party governance serves a warning to local residents concerned with the current Delcan study. Local citizens are well-justified in rejecting the competency of Delcan as an acceptable judge and jury. As Schrecker points out in, behind the veneer of public accountability, expert-consultants can be heard gearing up the methods to produce a result conducive to its client's and its own interest. The use of dualist yes/no quantitative measurement assumes that the ticks and tocks of public choice rating exercises can represent a host of ethical and political questions involved in transportation planning.

If we return to the previous arguments about the planning and administration of traffic it seems quite problematic that questions are being excluded at the outset of the assessment process. When questions that should be deliberated by political discussion are swept away onto the highway of rationality, and restrained from any

since this possibility did not coincide with the pre-existent purpose pattern established in their basic methodology.

re-valuation during and within due process, the uncertainty in decision making escapes public scrutiny. It is under the sureness of “true knowledge” that the “frightening responsibilities” of committing disastrous errors are most possible (Fisher, 2000; Lovins, 1977). Lovins goes even further in his harsh judgement in noting the ridiculous “objectivity” premise of econo-mechanistic studies. As he notes: “cost-benefit analysis does not eliminate subjective value judgements but rather moves them from the realm of political controversy into the expert’s opaque model – a step with disquieting implications for the political process...Cost-benefit analysis founders on the “quaint fantasy” that defining a problem, selecting alternative solutions, choosing relevant parameters and estimating values for them can replace, rather than disguise, subjective judgement” (1977: 938). Masquerading under this assumption the London TPR is a testament to the blatant normative position held just under the surface of a methodological orientation.

Collapsing substantive and performative reason into the same apolitical managerialism, the administrative mind protects itself in an artful gamesmanship of self-preservation and self-maintenance of the constructed order. Appropriated by the “entrepreneurial” governance team, to borrow from Hunt’s (2001) characterization of private-public partnership governance, a balanced coalition of city sponsored techno-bureaucrats and a third party consultant succeeded in deflecting criticism, acting opaque, appearing competent and looking legitimate. Whether conducted formally by city technocrats or farmed out to a proxy third party governor, social action of this kind relies on large scale vision in order to integrate the public and the private into the efficient organization of productive spaces. In this endeavour the reunited exercise of

technical competency and political legitimization is undertaken with the awful result of closing off debate, discussion and imagination. Fisher (2000:216) explains the failure when planners ignores the host of historical, social, environmental, technological and ecological links within the urban environment, “An urban community, like a sensitive ecological system, evolves over a substantial period of time. But as many of the failures of urban planning have made abundantly clear, the social and physical character of the local landscape can be altered irreparably by professionals who fail to learn from those with an intimate everyday relationship with the urban environment.” The horror of London’s grotesque methods seems to point Ottawa AVP/EA towards a similar failure by the simple fact that the discussion is directed by technical criteria, and led by a third party.

Both the case of London and Ottawa seem to indicate that alternative service delivery defuses influence and impedes process, the survey tools used by consultants amount to an “elaborate polling exercise” of information gathering “on a fixed agenda under restrictive terms of reference” (Graham and Phillips, 1998:8). As is, in the case of the AVP, citizens expected a process where-by they would have an impact on the outcome, and some power sharing would give them a window of influence in the framing of the questions. The eventual restricted terms of reference frustrated their good-will and disempowered their initiative. The variance in “expectation” mirrors the bifurcation between the experiential and expert knowledge. Expecting a power sharing they received an sophisticated extractive information gathering procedure. As Graham and Phillips note (1998), the techniques of public choice exasperate the distance and tension between these knowledge bases and does little more than to give

the techno-bureaucracy access to information in the malleable form necessary for their self-interested goals.

The contrast between the optimism of city-zen-led initiatives and planning's "fixation with road building" cranked out by the London report shows that hope and promise can dissipate quite quickly when "superficially neutral planning methodologies can embody such a strong bias against such a future" (Schrecker, 1996: 81). Easily excited by the promise of participation, community groups continue to get stung by the mirage of openness offered by third party consultancy. Despite significant advances in EA techniques since their apparition in the 1970s, communication between experts and citizens remains a one-way street. The shortage of capacity does not arise from a deficiency of road capacity rather from the reluctance of professional consultancy to listen to alternative views and to think along a multi-way boulevard with places for walkers, talkers and strollers. The engineered street vision has not only limited access to roadways but limited access to city-zenship.

Faced with utter frustration how do groups contest from within an obtrusively limited consultation? How and where do questions of equity, fairness and justice find their way into the decision framework? More importantly for the meaning of politics how do the conclusions of this *tragi-comédie* change when the staging is reversed to make city-zens the experts both in the "demosphere" and the "technosphere"? Specifically, how do skeptical city-zens respond when they realize the process meant to consult them effectively shuts them out? How do they differentiate themselves from the token gestures of representation? What doors do they open on a obscured

discourse and process of road-congestion? Another beat exists besides that of the bio-mechanical technical rationality and it has shown itself ready to unveil the buried ideology set into concrete modernism and embrace the dance in the street.

Thumping out the Beat

“Aucun évènement ne vie que par lui meme. On découvre toujours qu’il est lié à ce qui lui entoure. C’est peut-etre tout simplement que l’observateur de ce spectacle c’est moi. Chaque habitant a des rapports particuliers avec des parties definis de la ville”

Jean-Luc Goddard, *Two or three things I know about Her*

Shut out from determining their own interests and from asking their own questions by the dominating “horror” of performance of technical rationality, and suppressed by narrow modernity’s “swallowing and shattering of (city) life” (Berman, 1999:115), an active city-zenship has embraced the call made by Adkin (1998) and Wilson (1991) for non-commodified city space that is democratically controlled. Attracted by the promise of liberation from alienation in difference and diversity, and acting-out these calls for a *vita activa*, the unruly non-docile city-zenship claims its own performance as the definitive version of public life. Captivated by this imaginary, city-zens groups formed around the socio-environmental concerns attached to the AVP have initiated their counter-hegemonic struggle armed only with the knowledge of their neighbourhoods, the strength of their ties to other community actors and the capacity to learn when it counts most. Following in the foot-path of locally-oriented social actions the first initial “tell-it-to-the-experts” NIMBYism—most dramatically displayed during the Highcrest Hill School Meeting—reactions were soon followed up by more substantive and pro-active forms of resistance.

Realizing that NIMBYist objectionism never wins much ground in the corridors of technical rationality—for a host of reasons not the least of which is due to a host of regimented techniques designed to “consult”—community groups such as the Citizens for Healthy Communities and the City Center Coalition organized a campaign to convince their failing bureaucrats and elected officials of the folly of their one-way proposition. Frightened by an apparently closing horizon that was hinting at an advance green light to the AVP and realizing that the process was skewed against the “do nothing” option, community activists embraced celebration and joy instead of gloom and doom, and set to highlight their preferred proposed alternative to the AVP.⁶⁴ To voice their talents, and to contest the vision that had been prepared for them by the experts, they planned their own two-act performance for June 4th 2002. In the first act a noon-hour public rally would be held: in the second act they would stage a public information meeting.

On a bright sunny spring day in “Our Nation’s Capital,” laughing children, smiling faces, raging grannies and aging rockers gathered together to pierce light into the arteries of bio-mechanical power. Facing the Leviathan directly from the public grounds of its civic facade, a local high school freestyle urban-music collective began to beat out Ottawa’s hidden histor(y)city to the surface of political discourse with sweeping bash, bang, boom. Its symbolic en-fusion of democratic decongestion in helps, screams, cheers, jeers and thumps called-out a dance for all of city-zenry to enjoy on and around the street. In playing up the city-zenship of green recreative identity, this event celebrated diversity and voiced, from the bottom-up, a resounding

⁶⁴ As early as the Club of Rome report, environmentalist have often described events in apocalyptic terms to garner public attention to their cause. Some critics (Torgerson, 1999, Gosine, 2002) have

no to the “tick-tock, tick-tock.” In the process, the first act opened-up a space for action in the now-time, for meeting and consultation, for community and talk.

With a rhythmic thump, a celebration of actioning, the Citizens for Healthy Communities set their kaleidoscope of colour directly outside the grey spaces of the local state. Their spaces for action aimed to overcome the flattening of perspective that followed the flow of “heritage ideas” (Sewell, 2002) of retro-modernization represented by projects such as the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor. Un-convinced by its veil of rationality, city-zens planned this event to contest the “corridor mentality” and its associated road growth boosterism. These city-zens seemed innately to recognize the built-in otherness of nature and suburb as an ideological utilitarian separation of function that suppressed life. They reviled the proto-modernism of bio-mechanical terror and its scientific politics. Alienated by this dualist hybridity, their imagination saw instead hybridity in multi-functional three-dimensional urban reliefs. Willing to un-clog the histor(y)city’s arteries with an infusion of democratic decongestant, this popular participatory action contended the passive performance of expert-communication. When a celebratory tone accompanies the green imagination of community and life, it bestows upon action the capacity to envision living street-life: a city full of life and diversity, with young, old, and not so old or young, gathering to express and insert this vision on-top off and into meaningful places.

The meaning they attach to their corridor differs significantly from the functional map superimposed on the area by the planned exercise. Local residents see beyond the flattened north-south road perspective of the AVP plan. Residents see the

argued that this “gloom and doom” tendency has limited the appeal of green politics.

scope of the corridor extending up towards blue skies, down towards the green grasses that fill its spaces and across their neighbourhoods. In their place-map they see gardens, walks, children playing, and fresh air; while the parkway drive-through represents the desiccation of special places, congestion of their neighbourhood places and an overall threat to their lived experience.

The city center citizens from downstream communities of Sandy Hill, Centretown and Old Ottawa East most active in the contestations of the Parkway cannot afford to uphold the “other” concept of home and leisure; their daily experiences are etched into the fabric of urban life part of, rather than apart from, the city. In many ways they feel the buried ticker of modernist movement oriented city planning as it twirls through their neighbourhoods. Looking out their front window, across from the porch steps or down from the balcony they can attest to the errors of a third kind that circulate into the life blood of these locales. They’ve witnessed and heard the tragi-comic folly of technical rationality in its past and present incarnations, and understand how their vote as citizens is valued less than the vote of auto-commuters in the transportation marketplace.

Enraptured by either/or modernity, the specialized knowledges of traffic planning accepted the transportation marketplace as a basis for public policy. Their administrative mind services the isolated peripheral dwellers who see the weekday city as a collection of auto-ways, a collated montage of thoroughfares marking their journey from home to work and back. By travelling along these corridors they invoke the very image of modern city-zenship that was prepared on the grounds of torn up rails and functional spatialization. Caught in the circulatory system of the bio-

mechanical horror, the very imprint of one-way road building by planning documents such as Delcan recommendation #7 provides an *a priori* legitimization of this project. Moving along linear paths, the project imposes their sanctioned understanding of the space without discussion of those others bearing the brunt of road expansionism.

So engrained in the idea of the city is movement from A to B that even the citizens contesting this horror have focused – by choice or necessity – their battle on providing another image of movement, a rail-way, one that, while less carbon-based than a roadway, still relies on linear movement. This celebratory action has not grown roots deep enough to fully embrace a diverse understanding of street-life. The discursive conditions have limited the debate in such a way that “radical” ideas, such as traffic calming or travel demand management, are portrayed more as sci-fi fantasies than as well-tested traffic policy initiatives. The multi-functional street, much to the dismay of Allan Jacobs, John Sewell, Marshall Berman, or Jane Jacobs, has not become part of the lexicon. The present alternative to drive-out the road-way with a trained-corridor remains attached to the rush hour commute. While more accessible (in terms of class and age participation), the light-rail alternative through the corridor is still an enclosed and specialized one-way space. Its high-tech modernity entrenches the city landscape further in the limiting “yokes of corridor mentality” (Sewell, 2002). Corridors such as the AVP or its light-rail alternative continue to codify space in movement and create barriers to urban life. Either cemented in concrete-roads or spiked in hard-rail, limited access city-zenship must be thrown off track by city-zens as much as planners.

Appealing to such a counter-imaginary can be seen as radically irrational or just plain un-modern, uncivilized articulations of city-life. Wilson (1991) disagrees quite vociferously and argues just the opposite. By suggesting city-zens embrace the city not as a machine or even a series of telecommunications, but as a space of places for face to face contact, for expression and woman, for the sensate and ideational as well as the rational, she evokes a more just, humane, progressive city. Along with Adkin, Wilson moves green city-zenship beyond the symbolism of symmetrical civic aestheticism captured by the natural parks, recreation and residential life of Gréber's by-gone era. Their urban optimism circles past the well-intentioned but equally problematic anti-urban neo-romanticism of the old school garden-city and new school deep-ecology. What Adkin and Wilson do is point green city-zenship towards an urban imaginative that sheds modernity's narrow techno-centrism yet still accepts modernity's promises. As an act of imagination, playfulness, dynamism, openness, and flexibility anchors liberation in discursive conditions and lead planning exercises from the voices of an engaged city-zenry.

As Wilson (1991) and Sewell (1998) note, despite its weaknesses and flaws planning remains necessary for cities to work. But for a counter-imaginary to filter-up to councilors and to techno-bureaucrats, a radical shift in orientation must be carried out inside and outside the realm of policy professionalism. By advancing problem setting as non-technical "fundamentally normative and qualitative," Fisher argues (1995b) planning taps into local knowledge, and opens expertise to "intuitively sense opening and opportunities in human affairs" (Fisher, 1992: 369). Such a close contact with everyday experiences, language and culture understands "the life and death" of

the city. Under these political conditions, a decongested planning process relies on deliberation to reunite the political with landscape formation and ecology.

What is called for is not a complete abandonment of planning, rather, a different way of seeing planning and expertise is required. Torgerson's early review of administrative rationality clearly established a relationship between social movements and policy professionalism. Social movements fundamentally questioning the role of expertise in decision making and problem definition process. Somewhere in the median between the technosphere and the demosphere citizen and technical expertise can meet. A role reversal, a valuing of cultural rationality can "make planners aware of the basic meanings and values underlying the structures and forms" (Fisher, 2000: 217) and "re-synthesize" (Mosco, 1997) planning into a democratic action. A combination of particularized and generalized knowledge can help the city direct itself towards a more viable, socially and ecologically sustainable existence. This re-thinking of ways to see the city attempts to retrieve rationality from the depths of horrible econo-mechanistic thinking and aims to recapture the imaginative spirit of modernism.

CONCLUSION: THE HERE, NOW AND ONWARD OF UNOBSURED IMAGINATION⁶⁵

"For just as the flaneur, through the gestus of purposeless strolling, turns his back to the crowd even as he is propelled and swept by it, so the "angel of history," who looks at nothing but the expanse of ruin of the past, is blown backwards into the future by the storm of progress."

Hannah Arendt, 1968 (13)

The Here: Unveiling Auto-Modernization

Travelling along the corridors of auto-Modernization and accompanied by techno-legitimization, this locale's planning histor(y)city has powered forward a carbon-fuelled urban form. Ottawa's bio-mechanical builders, from Gréber to Delcan, have been consumed with accelerating economic expansion along exclusive road corridors. The failure in two acts, by municipal and civic actors, to liberate the city from an alienating urban histor(y)city, or from Parkway Modernization, can in part be attributed to a collective failure to transform the AVP contestation into a struggle of connection both outside and within the Alta Vista debate. This inability to link the AVP contestation to the outside material stresses of commuting in the post-industrial city, and within to the limited discursive spaces to which even their own alternatives are confined, has limited the possibility for action in this event. While citizens have expressed some non-commodified desires in the process of contestation they remain unable to transmute these into sustainable democratic or everyday practice. Yet, such an un-connectivity does not mean that local politics is unable to re-think the city. Nor, on a theoretical level, does Ottawa's failure to "imagine" mean that the intersection between green political thought and political economy is bottlenecked. Even if

⁶⁵ Thanks to Rianne Mahon for suggesting my conclusion think of the "Onward" as well as the "here

political economy's adherence to "the distributional consequences" rather than "the environmental consequences of production" (Williams, 1992) provides a tension with green political thought, this does not mean that each does not have anything to offer the other. Rather than focus on the limits of this contestation, and of the difficulty political economy and green political thought have had in meeting in the public square, the story of the AVP indicates that the challenge for each of these counter-hegemonic and holistic discourses is to speak more closely with each other, and to use this dialogue to locate an effective practice of everyday politics.

The celebratory tones of the city-zen-initiated events infer, as Adkin correctly observes, that there is promise for a durable ecological movement located in the "here" between the discursive and material conditions of everyday-life. The pressing need for a connectivity between the realms, and between needs, democratic principles, happiness and change is made more evident by the failure of this citizen contestation to break-free from the restrictive capture of administrative rationality. The way out from this mire, as Adkin and other locally-oriented scholars note, is to look at democratization—or specific proposals for institutional design—as "a necessary strategy of liberation for both individuals and communities" (Adkin, 1992: 145). How then (to recall the thesis question) can city-zens impound Parkway Modernization? Most significantly to a everyday politics, where is the "here" for ecological city-zenship to start?

To locate that "here," it is useful to re-think the investigation of city life, by city-zens and experts alike, through Fisher's (1992, 2000) playful promotion of artful imagination. Fisher contends that expertise would benefit from a greater exposure to

arts and culture.⁶⁶ Without alluding directly to the *flâneur*, Fisher invokes an “immersion into the sensations of the city” (Featherstone, 1998) as a way to better see the limits of the administrative mind, and the capture of imagination by technical rationality. Similar to the *cogito* of the *flâneur*, Fisher’s imaginative cognition trains investigators to recognize and reveal the “range of human folly, and the boundaries of human virtue” and to sense openings and opportunities closed off by technical rationality. He leads us to remember that, as Arendt (1968) observes, the abstract concept of reason is rooted in the actions of perceiving and hearing. As Arendt writes, once such opening is provided by the metaphor⁶⁷ whose “linguistic “transference” enables us to give material to the invisible... and thus render it capable of being experienced” (1968: 14).

What Arendt, Benjamin and Fisher identify through art and metaphor is the imaginative space of the “here” situated in the past and the present. As an “angel of history” that sees back into history and into the future, the *flâneur* metaphor-in-action opens up the picture window onto the street, and provides the link between discursive conditions, democratic mobilization and concrete changes. The veil of rationality begins to be exposed with the city-zen-*flâneur*’s ability to see the opening through experiences “which are spatially, temporally and culturally rooted” (Adkin, 1998: 312). Cultural rationality—a way of seeing which this thesis argues for—finds in the sights and sounds in the vision of *flâneurie*, the capacity to unveil the terrible obscurity of technical rationality. By altering the speed of decision making, and by

⁶⁶ As he notes “no doubt includes a greater exposure to arts, novels, plays poetry, culture and so on” (1992:370)

⁶⁷ Writing about Benjamin’s consideration of the metaphor Arendt wrote this: “Metaphors (the “greatest gift of language”) are the means by which the oneness of the world is poetically brought

openly questioning through dialogue the a priori need for roads, this way of seeing opens up the time-space question—and locates spaces for ecological movements.

One could contend that if the answer to the praxis of green local politics is in a metaphor, political economy is no closer to locating spaces for democratic mobilization nor is green political thought relieved from the centrifuge of eco-philosophical debates. However, if an urban politics is to break out from the narrow infrastructure discussions that dominate urban governance (Klodawsky and Andrew, 1999),⁶⁸ and if a democratic decongestant is to re-state happiness in non-consumptive action (Adkin, 1998), a different way of seeing is an integral part of the challenge. In Klodawsky and Andrew's (1999) view, the narrow definition of local politics as technical infrastructure questions accepted by local civil society has excluded imagination and connection and constituted a concrete-barrier to ecological practice. Metaphors, such as that of the *flaneur*, move the socio-environmental imagination away from technical questions, towards questions of possibility and hopefully towards Adkin's cultural struggle for "making alternative struggles structurally possible" (1998:307). It is through such struggles that the "irrational" and implausible such as demand management, roadways de-construction, and democratic inclusion enter into the realm of the possible.

While cultural rationality nurtures artful imagination, to succeed in the practice of progressive local politics, as Klodawsky and Andrew (1999) caution, the building of a "culture of reflexivity" also requires close attention to structure. For

about. What is so hard to understand about Benjamin is that without being a poet he thought poetically and therefore was bound to regard the metaphor as the greatest gift of language" (1968: 42).

⁶⁸ Klodawsky and Andrew (1999) argue that local civil society is often connected to, and defined by, the definition of local politics as being narrow infrastructure questions.

this, a new screenplay that includes many acts, many actors and a new venue is needed to provide the tangible opportunities for road discourse decongestion. The metaphor of the city-zen-*flaneur*'s experiential knowledge guides "this intellectual journey of exploration" (Arendt, 1968) to its starting point of imprinting the sensual into urban life.

The Now: The Struggle For Cultural Rationality in Urban Planning

"The ancient's intercourse with the cosmos has been different: the ecstatic trance. For it is this experience alone that we gain certain knowledge of what is nearest to us and what is remotest to us, and never one without the other. This means however that a man can be in ecstatic contact with the cosmos only communally."

Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street* (1938)

Travelling through the city as a city-zen-*flaneur* poses a radical departure from the space and time bound way of seeing the city. Consequently, an experiential urban politics found in this starting point strives to shake knowledge from the towered camera obscura and to contrast its "complete knowledge laboratory" with Benjamin's reunited time/space of the "here and now."⁶⁹ As a way to see the detail of unconscious city-life, cultural rationality focuses the regard of city planning on "life in the moment" rather than the hurried, quantitative survey. This now-time melds the unconsciousness of discourse with the "hard" concrete materiality to deliver a view that is significantly different from the tinted-windshield of restricted-access Parkway Modernization. Considered from outside the realm of industrial city design, and away from artificially segmented time-space, city-zen-inspired cultural moments picture the concrete detail of the city as a multi-modal, multi-dimensional, un-tick-tocked

people-spaces instead of, as does technical rationality, a fluid machine for pumping traffic through its arteries. Cultural rationality indulges in the full breath of what it means to *see* the city.

If, as greens argue, instrumental ends need to be reversed and democratic institutions redesigned through cultural rationality, what specific aspects of city-zen-action point to the potential for progressive action in the local? Moreover, what have the actors in this performance demonstrated about the value of cultural rationality and the promise of lasting counter-hegemonic struggle? And finally, how then can the acting-out of expertise be re-gearred to include the subdued voices of cultural rationality?

First, through this site of contention, despite barriers to genuine participation, the very fact that city-zens have been able to provide any alternative is a feat in itself. Without a budget, resources or staff, these “amateurs” provided a surprisingly “professional” understanding of their city.⁷⁰ Void of PR staffers, promotional distributors and any budget, active city-zens seem to “get it” in some cases much better than their “methodologically sound” planners. All efforts by the city and their consultant have been directed towards better communicating their message to the public. In their haste to show expertise, they have been unable to recognize that “the problem” is not how they are communicating with the public but rather that the problem lies deeper in the eyes of the chauffeured investigations. In contrast, the mole’s eye view of city-zenry is concerned with *who* directs the process, *what* the

⁶⁹ While the Geddes influenced Master Plan relies on empiricist snap-shots, Benjamin’s long-gaze embraces lived experientialism and human-paced impressions of spaces.

⁷⁰ At the same time, their process has not been exclusive nor has it been afraid to listen to the grips and gripes of those in favour of the AVP, nor have they shied away from a dialogue with them

venue for deliberation is and *how* this selected matrix orients the solution framework. The ability to direct questions towards the who, what and how of transportation planning indicates that there is strong evidence to support the claim that cultural rationality can, when given the opportunity, open up spaces for progressive local action.

Yet, despite their pertinent questioning, and semi-imaginative advocacy of counter-proposals, city-zen voices have yet to regain the consciousness of their unconscious. For one, the alternatives to the AVP presented by the local citizen groups remain in many ways a limited expression of green polycentric contrast to industrialism. Second, these local movements have yet to connect their NIMBYism to a host of social justice issues. Nonetheless, these voices have not been included to provide the evidence for a comparative evaluation of the merits of their proposals, or to point out the limits of their alternatives. The face of street expertise has been included to confirm that considered debate by city-zen-initiated forums can overcome the double failure of communication, offer some capacity for foresight, and an articulation of the terrible alienation and deprivation of car dominated urban planning.

Moreover, in fairness to these activists, they have not had the chance to step off the corridor, out of their cars and into the street to find the wonders and safety a lively place can offer. By stepping onto the margins, the boundaries and the curb of technical rationality, and by voicing an imagination that differs from petrol-driven “socio-spatial practices,” these city-zens are exposing themselves to the powerful backfire of auto-Modernization.

Under the unjust obscurity of Parkway Modernization, city-zens moving further from the curb of passive city-zenship and into the active disturbance of the orderly traffic flow of car-dominated laneways are not only physically threatened every time they set out into the street, but disadvantaged through a limited access to transportation (infrastructure-material), and restricted ability to participate in civic life (political-discourse). For these voices, limited access roadways equate limited access city-zenship. The shortage of road capacity is in effect a shortage of democracy; the deficiency in thinking, not in transportation.

Lending their “minds and magic,”⁷¹ the city’s Faustian bargainers have gambled off the local state in the name of progress and development, keeping for itself the “a-political” tasks of administration, distribution and allocation of infrastructure funds. By further contracting out the “non-political” task of deciding on the green-ness of project to third party governors, the rationalized bureaucracy has exasperated questions of representation, justice and fairness. As critics of green and urban persuasions have pointed out, the “magic” of cost-benefit bargains is an illusion; it allows social inequities to remain unresolved, favours vested interests, discounts socio-environmental concerns and perpetuates unsustainable use resource patterns.

Traffic management’s “old school” text-box continues to concern itself with quantifying and subsequently re-mediating existing and future LoS, HoV, v/c, capacity, projected travel and traffic corridors. Even inside the “new,” “technically

⁷¹ In relating the story of Faust, Berman (1982:63) makes this note on the Faustian political bargain: “they lend their mind and their magic to the emperor, to help him make his power newly solid and efficient. He, in exchange will give them unlimited rights to develop the whole coastal region,

beautiful” and “smart” City of Ottawa, the formalized and overdesigned street of traffic planners speaks only to increases in car-demand, targeted relief for failing intersections, and pinpointed lane-way re-sizing. These mechanical metaphors misrepresent the texture of the city by assessing it as a series linear gears organized in an axis of arterial roadways, in essence metaphorically reflecting the movement of individual parts of the clock in the etching of car-dominated thinking.

Instead of viewing the city as a series of econo-physical functions operating at optimal or non-optimal levels, the city-zen-*flaneur* captures the city mood. The city-Zen-*flaneur* feels the peace, tranquility, vibrancy, variety, dance, celebration, joy, contact and sunny-sides of urban life; sees the “other” wheeled-realm of strollers, shopping carts, wheelchairs, old skateboards, in-line skates, wagons and roto-tillers; hears the voices of the living such as Saskatoon berries, Manitoba Maples, sidewalk quack grass or scruffy looking squirreling scavengers; and smells the left-behind curb-side trash treasures. These images of teeming-ness are missed by technical rationality. Scientism’s methodology shows no “good measure” suited to this complexity; no excel program capable of forecasting it; no input-ouput model qualified to grasp its intricacies. Technical rationality has no language for city life.⁷²

including carte blanche to exploit whatever workers they need and displace whatever indigenous people are in their way” (1988: 63)

⁷² W. G. Sebald makes an interesting “art and culture” (Fisher, 1992) contribution to language as a barrier to debate in his book *Austerlitz*. As he writes, “If language may be regarded as an old city full of street and squares, nooks and crannies, with some quarters dating from far back in time while others have been torn down, cleaned up, and rebuilt, and with suburbs reaching further and further into the surrounding countryside, then I was like a man who has been abroad a long time and cannot find his way through this urban sprawl anymore, no longer knows what a bus stop is for, or what a back yard is, or a street junction, or an avenue of a bridge. The entire structure of language, the syntactical arrangement of parts of speech, punctuation, conjunctions, and finally even the nouns denoting ordinary objects were all enveloped in impenetrable fog” (2002:123-124). From this view of the city, the language of technical rationality is stuck in that same writer’s block that has struck Sewald’s character Austerlitz. Like Austerlitz, technical rationality is unable to communicate in the foggy underworld of its arrested language.

It does not appreciate human folly or human virtue. Its scalpel of choice in this case, the Terms of Reference of the AVP environmental assessment has carved city-life into a unrepresentative snap-shot.

The delineated choice preferences of the AVP/EA invoke the language of car-movement controlled by the narrowest of narrow administrative minds, its bio-mechanical horror running without people or places, moving isolated parts along a singular Hot Wheels loopy-loop track. The “new” Parkway proposes to transplant a “new” artery onto the existing arterial collection. With the goal of increasing the flow of isolated pods into the heart of the city, this proposal fails to see that the heart has reached its capacity to absorb any more flow. The collection-of-parts ontology upheld by ultra-utilitarian auto-centered planning is oblivious to the signs of decay and arterial hardening entombed in the language and materiality of congestion discourse. It seems that expertise can begin to re-gear, and penetrate the illusion of progress through shifts in city-language.

Openings for a new language exist, yet the lasting power of locally based counter-hegemonic struggles remains a open question. Still, the disastrous horror of the planning’s camera obscura urges city-zens to continue to contest on a multiplicity of sites, to sustain pressure from the outside as much as the inside, and to direct its dis-satisfaction with engrained Parkway Modernist practices. In this way that counter-hegemonic struggle of diversity led from outside the process may be more important than the charge-led from inside the “veil of rationality” that has captured the process of environmental assessment. The credibility of the consultant and their self-serving perpetuation of Parkway Modernism needs to be undercut by public pressure,

attention to unethical practice and by calls for fairness and justice for all city-zens. As long as discourse remains bolted to the distributor cap of public choice and the methods of atomistic determinism, alternatives will be not be voiced loud enough for the “root causes” of captivated “steel hulled” identities to be worked out.

The struggle over the AVP is not only a “for or against” debate over forms of concrete, identity or modernity, it’s a struggle over the imagination of the “other” (in the romantic sense) of separative functionalism of the city. Despite its limitations, the alternatives such as bus/rail presented by citizens as a possible option for the AVP corridor and the recognition by Delcan of the significance of the existing “green spaces” shows that cultural rationality has partly succeeded in penetrating the administrative mind’s outer shell. The events organized by community groups not only contested technical rationality by offering a different proposal, it also represented a here-now attempt to alter the terrain of discourse and to seize the spaces for talk opened up by the Smart Growth Summit. The somewhat timid endorsement of an alternative through every-day experiences showed the beginnings of imagination away from “old” set-in ideologies and practices. Even if artificially grafted add-on, the very inclusion of green issues means these concerns have filtered - however moderately - into the administrative sphere, and that incipient discursive designs are taking hold onto the shell of administrative practices.

Amazingly, these openings were set by and for citizens with almost no official sanction of their re-defined active city-zenship. The successful squeezing-in is even more surprising considering the sophisticated techniques of tactical inclusion developed and used in EA frameworks to subdue counter-imaginaries. Moreover,

opponents, individually and collectively, have been thoroughly maligned by the third party experts for being radical and irrational NIMBY spoilers that are intent on setting back progress to the detriment of the city as a whole. In a latent sense it is with the legitimizing force of a rational and ordered process that expert-actors have accused these meddlesome pedestrians-city-zens of not playing out “good city-zenship” according to the “moral imperatives” of control and order set out for them in the civilized nature of Parkway Modernism. Their non-compliant attitude is seen as an attack on the ideal of democracy and health imbedded in the “practical grids” of the Garden City.

Despite efforts to subdue protest on the street, residents remain recalcitrant. In their past and present dealings with expert-consuls and their allies in traffic planning, city-zens have recognized that the smog is thick, the NoXious fumes of hot-air expertise pestilent. Community activists continue to mistrust the auto-matic nature of technically dominated decisions as long the top-down third party governance is abandoned for real spaces for city-zen expression, spaces that consider issues such as equity, fairness, gender, class, social justice and the impact of expressway modernisms in all of its the material and symbolic expressions.

So far political blockage has impeded a decongestion of matrixed futures. The cast of citizens groups and experts have again arrived at a “failed intersection.” The first definitive conclusion to be drawn from this meeting is that city-zen actions have shown the value of cultural rationality. The second, is that the rigidity of technical rationality is unable to liberate either expert-planners or citizen-experts from the traffic congestion mindset. Caught in the gears of technical rationality, the solution to

congestion offered is more capacity, while what is required is not “more of the same” but a reflexive solution to perpetually failed intersections. Specifically, the solution offered by third party expertise, the confluence of the Delcan and the City Planning Department, is one that continues to follow Parkway Modernization down its path, to appeal to the same time honoured practices of a-political infrastructure construction, with terrible consequences.

A more vivid imagination from officials and subjects of terror will be required to break the shackles of Parkway Modernism, and move the discussion away from either/or possibilities. A shaking-up of the camera obscura is voiced from everyday activities, inspired by an imaginative struggle and rooted in the unconscious spaces, takes place in the “local” and “personal.” These alternative voices set in the banal and ordinary of everyday-life eek-out the terror from beneath the floor boards. From this vision, a third conclusion can be made. Governance that is “open and experimental” (Fisher, 1992b) rather than one dedicated to the narrow principles of engineering, has not appeared on during this limited run. City-zens are still playing on a staged event set out in the terms of technical rationality. The producer of this event, the Declan/City team keeps a firm handle on the purse strings, and has restricted the actors from artful self-direction.

Imaginative city planning is still searching for a new screenplay to allocate a new set of roles. Amidst this “space,” the search for progressive local politics, and a new screenplay still remains illusive/elusive. Situated somewhere between the material and the discursive, a post-positivist set reuniting cultural and technical rationality remains a significant challenge for urban governance. The experiences of

greens in city-zen-led decision making could provide the needed structure for such a new screenplay. If this is the case, how does a decongested city-zenship move on from the here and now to the onward of removing the allusion/illusion of technical rationality? Specifically, how do city-zens define the third act of expertise to ensure that it defines the who, what and where of city planning?

Onward: To Imaginative Modernism

“There was the pedestrian who wedged himself into the crowd, but there was also the flaneur who demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forego the life of the gentlemen of leisure. His leisurely appearance as a personality is his protest against the division of labour which makes people into specialists. It was also his protest against their industriousness. Around 1840 it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for walks in the arcades the flaneurs liked to have the turtles set the pace for them”

Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street* (1938)

Overcoming the complex and dynamic “problem” of congestion, to use the traffic jargon, begins with a questioning of the “veil of ideas” and a re-imagining the ends of movement within the city landscape. Through his insightful understanding of the link between culture, identity and political economy, and with his usual flair for modernism Marshall Berman re-calls that “the most critical of modern life need modernism most, to show us where we are and where we can bring to change our circumstances and ourselves” (1999:148). Radical departures from sterility find their onward in the here and now of local circumstance. As he notes, “we must start where we are...thrown together by the same forces that pull us apart, dimly aware of all we might be together, ready to snatch ourselves to grasp new human possibilities, to develop identities and mutual bonds that can help us together as the fierce modern air

blows hot and cold through us all” (1999:148). Berman understands the value of cultural rationality in shaping collective futures and of recognizing our where-ness, as well as the implicit role of the past as part of a process of emancipation. The challenge for cultural rationality remains to change, alter, or re-shape the discourse from auto-expansionism and towards a political infrastructure—or institutional design—that allays fears of isolation through the provision of concrete alternatives. In a sense, the onward is a re-collection of the past of city-life, and of the relegated illusions of both narrow and imaginative modernism.

The first chapter alluded to Jacob’s (1993, 2001) and Berman’s (1982) reflection on the type of modernism contained within the physicality of the city street. Both lament earlier imaginative conceptions of shared spaces including Haussmann’s multi-modal boulevard while vehemently criticizing the monolithic car-dominated landscapes that resulted from expressway modernism. Encouraged by the value of the city-zen-voyeur’s experiential knowledge, Benjamin’s struggle, not-unlike Berman’s, Jacobs’s and even Adkin’s, is to imprint the value of the sensual into modern life. Benjamin contributes to this thinking through of the street by linking unconsciousness of discourse with the “hard” reality of concrete material endeavors. His metaphoric appeal urges city thinkers to continue a search in the past and the future to imagine the street as a heterogeneous place, and consequently to finally showcase the moment as a creative break from homogenous flow.

The radical image of the *flâneur* walking a turtle seems at first an odd-protest to industrialism. It’s comical imagery can easily be dismissed as an act of un-nerving irrationality that simply succumbs to the commodity experiences of urban life albeit

at a different pace. So why is this image so disturbing to socialists, utopians, liberals and modernists? Why does walking at a pace set by a turtle seem so foolish to modern life? Why do such variations in pace time/space not “fit in” with the lexicon of city planning?

The story of the AVP confirms that both symbolic and material spaces have been foreclosed to the personalities that desire to move at an alternative pace to the one set by the cars of Gréber’s bio-mechanical horror. The image of the *flâneur* leads the reader of the city to look poetically into the present planning moments to “wrest from the past” the “process of decay” and the “process of crystallization” that mutually shape the nature of Ottawa’s modern productive identity, and to “discover new ways of dealing with the past” (Arendt, 1968). It urges city-zens and planners alike to look at the past of the city to see its future orientation, locate “forgotten treasures” and to find voices for the compact, multi-modal, socially just city. This exercise is painful for productivist as it questions the fundamental pace of life set in the histor(y)city of urban life.

The histor(y)city of Ottawa, like other planned Garden Cities, is constructed in an “othered” bio-mechanical nature, an odd confluence of romantic naturalism and hardened arterial circulation. Contained within a mechanical linear understanding of place and region this bio-mechanical horror, like the heart beneath the floor boards ticks-on, even as it extinguishes life. So bravely envisioned by Jacques Gréber, the concrete linguistics of the limited access parkway has—if not defunct by the time it was being implemented—surely worn out the feeble track. Drawing on Benjamin’s future orientation in past experience, a re-imagination of the meaning of city politics

calls for a responsibility to remember past injustices of one-track minds: to live in solidarity with the past in multiple visions of the future. Speaking from years of experiential knowledge in urban contestations to the past “follies” of unjust expressway building, to the “now” unreason of corridor mentalities, and specifically to the dis-virtue of the present AVP proposal, John Sewell, as if listening to Benjamin’s call to remember past injustices, suggested that revelatory June 4th evening that the idea of a “new” corridor be placed along side other “old” expressway relics. His poetically inspired cultural rationality, drawn from years of urban activism, sees the AVP for what it is in the past, present and future. As he notes, “The corridor is an old planning concept for Ottawa. This corridor, Alta Vista, has been in municipal planning documents since 1966. That’s 36 years ago. One could argue that it’s so old as an idea that age has truth upon it, but I think it’s outmoded, an idea that’s in the way. It may be more helpful to declare it a ‘heritage’ idea that should not be desecrated by implementation. Better just designate it and keep the paper generated by this weird idea in a library of rare books” (Sewell, 2002) The Alta Vista Parkway continues in the history of the now as an echo of the ideological generations that mediate city life, of fear the diversity and disorderly interconnected dances.

Rather than relegating Jacques Gréber’s ghost with his counterparts on the fourth floor of the Victoria Museum, his presence still haunts the NCC, the city and the regional imagination. Gréber’s proposals for a modern urban circulatory continue to sway identity and production, and drive Parkway Modernism to this day.⁷³

⁷³ In a recent announcement about the re-development of the NCC administered LeBreton Flats area Marcel Beaudry proudly announced that the “new” Le Breton Boulevard (or parkway) would “provide a spectacular vista for people entering the downtown core.” It was as if Gréber himself was extolling the virtues of majestic vista reconstitution.

Considering the continued separation of function proposed in this extension and in the city's AVP, it is indeed quite critical for the local city-zenry to develop a language to enter into the discussion with imagination, and away from yes/no, either/or dichotomies wrapped up in parkway modernism. As an experienced expressway-buster and urban thinker Sewell expressed his excitement for city life and the need for a new planning language in this way, "What's needed are some new words which deserve a new vision, one that describes a city in which there are overlays of activities, where people live and work in close enough proximity to create an urban intensity which generates empathy and excitement, where the balance is tilted towards transit and in favour of active multifaceted streets" (Sewell, 2002). If heed was paid to this lived- wisdom, the AVP planning proposal would remain a historical object to past follies and tragedies. What better way to decongest restrictive discourse than with the tools of living language. Sadly lay-experience does not subscribe to the EA matrix parameters; if it did it would their voice would shout a resounding no to this "old" expressway idea.

The imaginative city-zen-*flaneur* does not fear the multi-faceted street, it hears its life, cradles multi-modal transportation, nurtures street-life and embraces urbanity. Gaining such an imaginative spirit, coaxing it from a struggle of specificity into a broader coalition of advocates for healthy green cities, is not guaranteed. Its promise is nebulous, yet surely the celebratory tone of local ecological movements is more appealing than the drab grayness of techno-bureaucratic rationalities. All the same, imaginative cities come not from spontaneous impulses of action, as much as they do not arise from quantified and measured plans. An imaginative city has the

potential to find itself in the considered and experiential practice of deliberation where city-zens set the course and professionals facilitate the empowerment of “institutional and intellectual conditions that help people pose questions in their own (or everyday) languages” (Fisher, 1992:367). By reversing the scripted meeting of citizen-expertise and professional-expertise the stage lights shine onto the social learning between these two sometimes, but not necessarily, oppositional realms. To re-gain the imaginative aspects of modernism while continuing to enjoy the insights of specialized professional knowledge will require a new meeting of these forms of expertise where the city-zen-*flaneur* cultural rationality directs the debate and determines the pace of life. Freeing modernity from the limited clutches of technorationality, a-historicism, and a-culturalism, this re-balancing of expertise unveils the hidden “nature” of Parkway Modernism. Letting city-zens decide on the “problematization” and the process of inquiry is the first step to decongestion: imaginative modernism promises to follow.

Imaginative reconnections to the city and away from the confinement of yesteryear-suburbs will take a re-awakening of the ghosts of “destructive identities”⁷⁴ set in production and space. Re-stating happiness through non-consumptive actions is indeed the challenge for a ecologism that sticks. Recognizing the alienation of urban existence, as suggested by Adkin, begins by re-connecting city-zenship to the spaces of real experiences. During such an endeavour, through the act of participation, discursive practices are reunited to materialism conditions. Located between the material and discursive realm, and specifically in “pedestrian” experiences of urban-

⁷⁴ In borrowing from Marcuse, Adkin (2001:307) reminds us that, “The potential of ecology as a social movement lies in establishing the destructive identity between freedom and happiness.”

life, a citizen decongestant hears the hidden whispers of alienation and domination protruding from the sidewalk cracks. The ongoing Alta Vista Parkway saga suggests that a screenplay for the liberation from the discourse of road-congestion is spoken from experience and action, embraced in forgotten magic of an unscheduled democracy shouted out and celebrated, on, in and over the street.

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