

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: ACTS OF LIVELIHOOD: BODIES AND
NATURE IN INTERNATIONAL GARDEN
CITY MOVEMENT PLANNING, 1898-1937

Samuel M. Clevenger
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Dissertation directed by: Professor David L. Andrews
Department of Kinesiology

Urban planning and reform scholars and policymakers continue to cite the “garden city” community model as a potential blueprint for planning environmentally sustainable, economically equitable, humane built environments. Articulated by the British social reformer Sir Ebenezer Howard and his 1898 book *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, the model represented a method for uniting the benefits of town and country through a singular, pre-planned, “healthy” community, balancing spaces of “countryside” and “nature” with affordable, well-built housing and plentiful cultural attractions associated with city life. The book catalyzed an early twentieth-century international movement for the promotion and construction of garden cities. Howard’s garden city remains a highly influential context in the history of town planning and urban public health reform, as well as more recent environmentally-friendly urban design movements.

To date, while historians have long examined the garden city as an agent of social and spatial reform, little analysis has been devoted to the role of prescribed embodiment and deemed “healthy” physical cultural forms and practices in the promotion and construction of garden cities as planned communities for “healthy living.” Informed by recent scholarship in Physical Cultural Studies (PCS), embodied environmental history, cultural materialism, and theories of modern biopower, this dissertation studies the cultural history of international garden city movement planning in early twentieth century Britain and the United States. Studying archival materials related to some of the prominent planners and resultant communities of the movement, I focus on the biopolitical dimensions of the planners’ contextual designs for “nature,” “health,” and “healthy” physical culture as they devised material garden city community layouts. I argue that the intentional British and American garden cities created during the movement were planned as spatialized strategies for the regeneration of laboring bodies through organized, bourgeois physical cultural practices and access to nostalgic spaces of “naturally healthy environments and outdoor recreation.

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by

Samuel M. Clevenger

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Advisory Committee:

Dr. David L. Andrews, Chair

Dr. Shannon L. Jette

Dr. Jennifer D. Roberts

Dr. Stefano Villani

Dr. Thomas Zeller, Dean's Rep.

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Dedication

This entire dissertation is dedicated to the late Dr. Ronald Schultz, my former graduate adviser and Professor of History at the University of Wyoming. Thank you for your wisdom, your mentorship, and your kindness. It was through your teaching that I learned to think through the uses and politics of “theory”. Thank you for responding to every email, for helping me work through my concerns and worries, and for showing me the path to becoming an insightful scholar of history. I am sorry

I did not finish this in time for you to see me defend it.

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imparting. Ronald Schultz told me to follow what you taught about British Cultural Studies, Raymond Williams and Paul Willis. They were absolutely right. I will always be grateful that I stayed in the PCS program and worked under your advisement. If I become a quarter of the scholar you are, I will retire satisfied.

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Introduction: Something Gained by the History of Garden Cities!

Letchworth Garden City, a 1923 promotional leaflet declared, “is being developed...on lines which secure a maximum of light and air for every dwelling, and provide a clean, healthy and pleasant town for people to live in.” With community planners applying the “best of modern knowledge” on the town’s layout, on an estate of undeveloped countryside north of London, Letchworth was promoted as the ideal “healthful” solution to the “the insanitary evils of old towns and the monotony of modern suburbs” and the deleterious effects of nineteenth and twentieth-century British urban development and industrial capitalism: a prescribed built environment form for the restoration and maintenance of British working class bodies and healthy forms of physical culture.¹ The leaflet proclaimed Letchworth the first fully planned community to be created as a result of an international movement for the promotion of garden cities, a community model articulated by the English social reformer Sir Ebenezer Howard as the means for restoring a “healthy, natural, and economic combination of town and country life...”² Howard envisioned his garden city model as the materialization of a practical, yet utopian impetus, shared by middle and upper class Anglo-Saxon reformers, to solve the rapid overcrowding of cities and depopulation of the countryside for the cause of improving the British nation’s bodily strength. Through the garden city, they sought to install the conditions wherein the

¹ Letchworth: The First Garden City in England, Entirely Surrounded by an Agricultural Belt of 3,000 Acres (1923), Garden City Collection, Garden City Collection Study Centre (hereafter referred to as GCCSC), Letchworth, United Kingdom.

² Ebenezer Howard, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1898), 13.

urban workers of Britain could be resettled, their social and physical health could be “regenerated” through organized community life and preserved countryside spaces, and the strength of the British Empire could be revitalized and protected by returning urban dwellers “back to the land” long mythologized in English lore: the pre-industrial countryside. The garden city model was promoted as at once a blueprint for urban, spatial, and housing reform, and a vehicle for the regulation and maintenance of Britain’s working class bodies through community design.

Within this context, important “biopolitical” undercurrents shaped the activities of the international garden city movement, with each community designed as *the* ideal, healthiest environment for the national citizenry and a paternalist remedy for the “civilizing” of poor urban workers through their relocation to “healthier” landscapes. Prominent communities that materialized as a result of the international garden city movement—namely Letchworth Garden City in the United Kingdom and Sunnyside Garden, New York and Radburn, New Jersey in the United States—were shaped by their planners’ conceptions of what constituted the ideal health and healthy embodiment for the nation, as well as its relation to idealized spaces of “nature”. As a result, the history of the garden city movement was not simply a progressive development in perfecting the planning of healthier built environments, but rather a complicated history fraught with contextual and (bio)political contingency. The “properness” of garden city planning was, at root, a class-defined, racial and gender-bounded strategy of social and physical regeneration: a means of utilizing preconceived and reformed housing communities to create environments where working class residents would be persuaded to live through the planners’ idealized

and prescribed forms of embodiment and interactions with “natural” or green spaces. In these idealizations of garden cities, the planners concomitantly idealized conceptions of nature and forms of embodied living as the pivotal, interrelated components ensuring the healthfulness of each planned community. Such conceptions were historical and biopolitical constructions dialectically implicated the cultural and ideological milieu of the period. How did these planners arrive at their conceptions of “health” and “nature”? How were their definitions of health related to their visions of what constituted healthy, “natural” living? What did they believe constituted “naturally healthy” surroundings, landscapes and communities, and in what ways did they think garden cities were a response to the social crises of their time period?

To address these and other related questions, this dissertation explores the history of the international garden city movement, focusing on the years from Howard’s explication of his originating garden city model in his 1898 treatise *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, to the FDR administration’s incorporation of garden city principles in the United States federal government’s design and construction of Greenbelt, Maryland in 1937 through the federal greenbelt town program.³ The dissertation focuses specifically on the case studies of Letchworth Garden City in the United Kingdom, Sunnyside Gardens, New York, Radburn, New Jersey as they represented illuminative materializations of garden city planning, as well as contexts in the transformation of garden city ideals into practical community

³ Howard, *To-morrow*; Cathy D. Knepper, *Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

plans to restructure the spaces of lower class living for the purposes of producing healthier bodies and citizens. Focusing on the planning of garden city communities on both sides of the Atlantic allows me to examine how such ideals were culturally exchanged between town and community planners in both countries. My aim is to historically explore how planners, by instilling their ideals of health, nature and forms of living within garden city community plans, infused garden city communities with a contradictory “nostalgic biopolitics” in which their prescribed town layouts, designs and guidelines were politicized manifestations of ideal embodiment that simultaneously harkened both to past and present cultural forms of healthy, “natural” living, and expressed these through prescribed community activities and the pre-planning of each town. Because of this, the dissertation does not necessarily attempt to significantly revise the historiographical literature on garden cities, as such works have thoroughly examined the general social, architectural and ideological history of the towns.⁴ Rather, I focus on the ways garden city ideals entailed an imagined and prescribed relation between resident’s bodies and the natural/built environments that informed the paternalist, biopolitical garden city planning, a key aspect that to date

⁴ There is an extensive literature on the history of the English garden city movement. See Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Stephen V. Ward, *The Peaceful Path: Building Garden Cities and New Towns* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2016); Stephen V. Ward, *Garden City* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013); Walter L. Creese, *The Search for Environment: The Garden City Before and After* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Peter Hall and Colin Ward, *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Chichester: John Wiley, 1998); Standish Meacham, *Regaining Paradise: Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler, eds., *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Robert Beever, *The Garden City Utopia: A Critical Biography of Ebenezer Howard* (London: Macmillan, 1988); Mervyn Miller, *English Garden Cities: An Introduction* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2010); Walter L. Creese, *The Search for Environment: The Garden City, Before and After* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

has not been comprehensively examined in the historiography. It is in studying the *relations* between imagined embodiments, conceptions of nature, and built environments that one can engage with the historical and cultural complexity of garden city planning, and the ways in which community thinkers responded the political, economic, and sociocultural conditions of their periods by imposing a nostalgic form of living onto a material built environment.⁵

As they critiqued industrial capitalism's undesirable shaping of urban housing and living space, Victorian reformers who supported the garden city movement saw the community model as a spatial palliative for uniting "naturally healthy" countryside within a wholly modern town plan. In his noted 1912 pamphlet on the objectives of the garden city movement titled *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*, famed British architect and Letchworth planner Sir Raymond Unwin proclaimed that garden cities proposed not just any form of community planning, but the "proper" planning of a town, the "proper" balancing of city and country life, and the "proper arrangement" of building in relation to open space. This "properness" articulated a Victorian perception of "unhealthy" urban life, and the view held by many middle and upper class reformers of the time that low income workers were degenerating, socially and biologically, in the sordid, overcrowded spaces of urban slums. For these reformers, the garden city could resolve the contradiction between their disdain

⁵ In his seminal history of the Columbia River, Richard White wrote that his research project concerned not simply the reconstruction of the history of the river, but rather a study of the historical relations between humans, fish and the natural environment. "I want the history of the relationship itself," White argued. This approach allowed White to study the historical contexts in a way blurred, rather than reproduced, supposed boundaries separating humans and nature. This dissertation follows White's example, in that the object of inquiry here is the relation between cultural ideas of health and healthy living and the designing of garden city communities. It is not a wholesale history of garden cities, but a history of such cultural and ideological relationships. See Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), x.

for the urban industrial environment and their romantic “nostalgia” for the English countryside, “civilizing” the working class and introducing them to bourgeois understandings of health, contentment, privacy, and maintained physical culture through a single built environment form. Unwin incorporated an exclamation point in his pamphlet’s title to emphasize the necessity of immediate urban and housing reform not only to benefit the conditions of workers, as he and other reformers saw the rapid, unchecked growth of cities and industry as an “evil” that threatened to “obliterate the country all around” and prevent workers from enjoying “fresh air, recreation and contact with growing nature.”⁶ In this sense, planners and reformers like Unwin saw the garden city as not just a planned community, but a deployable strategy for elevating the physical, social and cultural “well-being” of its inhabitants through the structuring, organizing, and regulating of the built environment and embodied activities. The garden city, in short, was to be the panacea of their historical moment: a modern means of resettling the British classes onto planned built environments that could also bring to material fruition their nostalgic imaginings of ample country and green space and beautiful natural and well-built surroundings, the necessary ingredients (in their reformist visions) for socially and physically regenerating the health, bodies, and culture of urban dwellers.

Thus, examining the history of garden city community designs means interrogating the deeply historical, contextual, and often contradictory circumstances of each town planner’s underlying conceptions of health, nature, and livelihood as

⁶ Raymond Unwin, *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding! How the Garden City type of development may benefit both owner and occupier* (Westminster: P.S. King & Son, 1912).

each town materialized in its prescribed form. The proclaimed founder of the movement, Sir Ebenezer Howard, envisioned his ideal garden cities as harmoniously balancing city and country life through planning measures such as the preservation of a belt of undeveloped agrarian landscape surrounding the community and the installment of organized physical cultural and park spaces. His understanding of what constituted ideal “health” and “nature,” were linked to the community’s ability to return residents to a pre-industrial, bucolic form of living he believed existed prior to the rapid, congested urbanization of industrial capitalism.⁷ In comparison, as American town and regional planners incorporated garden city ideals within their schemes for new planned communities, their definitions of ideal health and natural spaces shifted in relation to the dominant national mythology concerning “natural” spaces of health and physical culture, reproducing “wilderness” spaces as the places fostering traditional, “healthy” American values of democracy and cooperation.⁸ In this, both the English and American garden city community projects promoted ideologically-complex and contextually-specific conceptions of health, embodiment, and natural environments. The communities arguably represent some of the most complete and prominent manifestations of international garden city movement ideals,

⁷ Howard, *To-morrow*, 2-5; Typescript of brief biographical notes, Folder 17 - “Anecdotes by Ebenezer”. Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (hereafter referred to as HALS), Hertford, United Kingdom.

⁸ “Resettlement Administration”, Folder 1 – “Resettlement Administration, 1935-1937”, Box 238 - Correspondence 1933-1945: Resettlement Administration, Rh-Rn [1937], Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers, FDRPL.

and are thus fruitful sites for studying their historical conditioning and importance in planning the communities.⁹

Studying the history of garden city ideals and communities is a topic of increasing contemporary importance due to the continued widespread influence of garden city movement ideals on twentieth and twentieth-first century urban and suburban planning, as well as projects for the creation of healthy and sustainable living environments. In itself, the early twentieth-century creation of garden city-inspired communities in Great Britain and the United States remains a key moment in histories of modern town planning and public health initiatives concerning urban reform and the healthfulness of living in relation to natural environments.¹⁰ The garden cities in large part became the influential predecessor to the construction of post-World War II British New Towns, New Towns and New Urbanist communities in the United States, and planning movements throughout the world.¹¹ The influence of garden city ideals, however, should not be understood as a socially neutral or progressive development, as the incorporation of garden city ideas and objectives

⁹ See Mervyn Miller, *Letchworth: The First Garden City* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1989); Joseph L. Arnold, *The New Deal in the Suburbs: A History of the Greenbelt Town Program, 1935-1954* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971).

¹⁰ For sources on the importance of garden cities within the history of modern town planning, see Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014); Kenneth Kolson, *Big Plans: The Allure and Folly of Urban Design* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Anthony Sutcliffe, *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, 1800-1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); "Garden City Urban Planning," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed March 4, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/garden-city-urban-planning>. For sources on the place of garden cities within histories of public health and the healthy city planning, see Marina Kenzer, "Health Cities: A Guide to the Literature," *Environment and Urbanization* 11, no. 1(1999): 201-220; Jason Corburn, *Healthy City Planning: From Neighbourhood to National Health Equity* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 39-43; Chinmoy Sakar, Christopher J. Webster and John Gallacher, *Healthy Cities: Public Health through Urban Planning* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2014).

¹¹ See Miller, *Letchworth*; Pascaline Gaborit, *European New Towns: Image, Identities, Future Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Bruce Stephenson, "The Roots of the New Urbanism: John Nolen's Garden City Ethic," *Journal of Planning History* 1, no. 2(2002): 99-123.

within imperialist and fascist town planning showcased the potential in how such ideals could complement eugenic and colonial objectives.¹² In a contemporary moment in which the consequences of unchecked global capital accumulation and ecological destruction becomes ever more apparent, examining the history of garden cities and greenbelts can help inform present struggles to imagine and create more equitable, environmentally sustainable and non-alienating communities throughout the world.¹³

A Garden City Embodied Environmental History

In studying constructions of health, nature and embodiment in the community planning of the international garden city movement, the dissertation places an embodied environmental historical approach in conversation with garden city and greenbelt community histories. As historian Christopher Sellers explains, an embodied environmental history studies the body as “the most critical middle ground where...relations between nature and culture are being actively remade as well as rethought”; environmental histories in which the body is the historical vantage point through which the relations between culture, human experience, and natural environments can be studied.¹⁴ In part an expansion from environmental

¹² Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz, eds., *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning: Transnationality and Urban Ideas in Africa and Palestine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Wolfgang Voigt, “The garden city as eugenic utopia,” *Planning Perspectives* 4(1989): 295-312.

¹³ See Ian Angus, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System* (New York: Monthly Review, 2016).

¹⁴ Christopher Sellers, “Thoreau’s Body: Towards an Embodied Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 4(1999): 486-514. For an environmental history of the twentieth century, see

historiography, such an approach sees the body as a historical discursive register through which the meanings of human interaction with natural environments and landscape, and the articulations and relation of power, can be highlighted and studied. To date, many embodied environmental histories have tended to focus on the role of work and labor as the historical mediator between the human and the environmental, studying contexts such as California citrus workers and Hawaiian migrant laborers to better understand how their the activities of their laboring bodies helped to blur the boundaries between environmental processes and the processes of capital.¹⁵ This focus on labor as the historical nexus between the cultural and environmental allows the arguments of embodied environmental histories to often complement ecological Marxist conceptions of human labor pursuits as historically linked to capitalist and ecological processes.¹⁶ Other historians have importantly studied historical relations between humans, environments, and issues of disease and health, as well as how changing ideas about the body have shaped perceptions of natural landscapes and their supposed healthfulness or cultural significance.¹⁷ All of these embodied

J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

¹⁵ See Neil M. Maher, "Body Counts: Tracking the Human Body Through Environmental History," in Douglas Cazaux Sackman, ed., *A Companion to American Environmental History* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 163-178; White, *The Organic Machine*; Richard White, "'Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?': Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 171-85; Douglas C. Sackman, "Nature's Workshop: The Work Environment and Worker's Bodies in California's Citrus Industry, 1900-1940," *Environmental History* 1(2000): 27-53; Neil M. Maher, "A New Deal Body Politic: Landscape, Labor, and the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Environmental History* 3(2002): 435-61; Gregory Rosenthal, "Life and Labor in a Seabird Colony: Hawaiian Guano Workers, 1857-70," *Environmental History* 17(2012): 744-782; Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Ecological Marxist texts will be referenced and cited in the subsequent pages of this dissertation. For a text on the development of ecological Marxist lines of thought, see John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark, "Marxism and the Dialectics of Ecology," *Monthly Review* 5 (2016): 1-17.

¹⁷ Courtney L. Wiersema, "A Fruitful Plain: Fertility on the Tallgrass Prairie, 1810-1860," *Environmental History* 16(2011): 678-699; Peter Thorsheim, "The Corpse in the Garden: Burial,

environmental histories help to illustrate how, to borrow Joy Parr's words, "[b]odies...are historically malleable and contextually specific," archives of knowledge obtain through senses and experiences of environments and technologies.¹⁸ With the historical focus as the central focus, embodied environmental histories affords the analytical tools necessary for studying historical perceptions of human-environmental interactions in a way that dissolves, rather than reinforces, the traditional polarizing binary of nature vs. culture.

Though embodied environmental histories importantly highlight the interactions between bodies and environments within history, environmental histories have long illuminated the various relations between humans, knowledge, culture and environments, with William Cronon writing in 1995 that "the way [humans] describe and understand [the nonhuman world] is so entangled with our own values and assumptions that the two can never be fully separated." The issue of the relation between culture, ideology, and human understandings of the environment have been examined for some time, buttressing Raymond Williams' study of the historically and contextually complex meanings associated with articulating "Nature."¹⁹ As a result,

Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London," *Environmental History* 16(2011): 38-68; Christopher C. Sellers, *Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Nancy Langston, *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization, and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Conevery Bolton Valencius, *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

¹⁸ Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 1.

¹⁹ William Cronon, "Introduction: In Search of Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 25; Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 219-24; see Andrew C. Isenberg, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); For an early influential environmental historical text on the relation between

environmental histories have elucidated the historical politics enmeshed in human understandings of nature and natural spaces in ways that help rethink understandings of historical processes traditional understood as human/cultural. Through such studies historians have illuminated how constructions of “Nature” in Western societies have long reproduced gendered, racial, and national hierarchies, as well as reformulate histories of technological development (such as industrializing and urbanizing processes) as at once cultural, natural, and contextual processes.²⁰ Such histories shed light on how to study the political dimensions of conceptions of nature and natural spaces, with the body as the historical nexus through which such politics become articulated and contextually displayed.

With garden city movement histories focusing on the social, intellectual and spatial histories of the various community projects, as well as their relation to the overall history of community, regional, and government planning, my dissertation expands and branches off from their preceding analyses by examining how constructions and ideologies of embodiment have functioned in relation to conceptions of health and nature in the planning of utopian, cooperative, and model communities. Scholars have long articulated the relation between people’s bodies and cultural values with cities and designed landscapes.²¹ To the best of my

ideology and perceptions of the environment, see Roderick Nash’s study of American conceptions of wilderness spaces in *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

²⁰ Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Peter Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006); Parr, *Sensing Changes*; Martin Reuss and Stephen H. Cutcliffe, eds., *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010); William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

²¹ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994); Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: a Cultural and Architectural History*

knowledge, however, this dissertation constitutes one of the first systematic attempts—I'm referring here to the predominant historical literature on garden cities, greenbelts, and related planning projects—to study not only the role of politicized embodiment in the history of international garden city planning, but to situate and examine the history through the historical lens of biopolitics.²² As the reader will come to find, in many ways the dissertation is an expansion of scholars Thomas Osborne's and Nikolas Rose's assertion that Ebenezer Howard's garden city model was part of an intention to "ameliorate social relations" through "an appropriate style of urban environment."²³ While such histories examine the historical ideas of the garden city movement and the creation of greenbelt communities, there has yet to be a focused study on the corporeal-cultural politics of the movement: how culturally constructed ideas of health, nature, and ways of living were prescribed and inferred as

(New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001); Maher, *Nature's New Deal*; Andrew C. Isenberg, ed. *The Nature of Cities* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006); Martin Reuss and Stephen H. Cutcliffe, eds. *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

²² Many of the works concerning English garden city history were referenced in footnote #6 of this introduction. See also Mervyn Miller, *Letchworth*; Mervyn Miller, *Raymond Unwin: Garden Cities and Town Planning* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992); Mervyn Miller, *Hampstead Garden Suburb: Arts and Crafts Utopia?* (Stroud: The History Press, 2006); Dugald Macfadyen, *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970). For histories of the federal greenbelt town program, see Cathy D. Knepper, *Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Arnold, *The New Deal in the Suburbs*; Paul K. Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959); Molly Timmins MacKean, "Greenbelt America: A New Deal Vision for Suburban Public Housing" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2013); Arnold R. Alanen and Joseph A. Eden, *Main Street Ready-made: The New Deal Community of Greendale, Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2013); Susan L. Klaus, *Links in the Chain: Greenbelt, Maryland and the New Town Movement in America* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington University, 1987); Clarence S. Stein, *Toward New Towns for America* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966). There has been important studies on embodied and gendered subjectivities in the modern construction and inventions of urban "utopias," but the garden city largely escaped these attention of the volume of scholars. See Amy Bingaman, Lise Sanders and Rebecca Zorach, eds., *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²³ Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose, "Governing Cities: Notes on the Spatialisation of Virtue," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17 (1999): 748.

embodied “ways of operating” through garden city and greenbelt community plans and guidelines for architecture, town layout, and resident activities.²⁴ An embodied environmental history of the international garden city movement, focusing on the role of cultural ideas of embodiment, nature, and health in the design, planning, and guidelines of the communities, places embodied environmental history into a productive and important conversation with the history of garden city and modern town planning. Such a study contributes to the existing canon of historical literature a suggestive exposé into the politics of embodiment in the history of community planning and conceptions of nature and health.

A Physical Cultural Studies Historical Dissertation

My dissertation research has developed from within a program dedicated to Physical Cultural Studies (PCS): the critical studying of everyday active body cultural practices and contexts and the interrogation of how such practices and uses of the active body are/were mobilized within contextual relations and articulations of power. A recent elucidation by prominent PCS proponents Michael Silk and David Andrews framed the project as emerging in part from previous political projects such as British Cultural Studies, in that PCS scholars understand everyday (physical) culture as

²⁴ Michel de Certeau wrote how living spaces, organized and produced as places of living and being in the world, entail “ways of operating”, literally the ways/styles people act and do in the course of their everyday lives. De Certeau wrote that once a space is produced, distinguished, or given a role, there are discernable “ways of operating” within that spatial field that are at one level regulating (as kind of “instructions” for living) and at another an opportunity for obeying other rules of operating. See Michael de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 29-31.

integral components in the organization and operation of social power within contextual sets of relations.²⁵ In this way, PCS is partly indebted to a tradition of Marxist analysis flowing from the British tradition of cultural studies: a Marxian analysis devoted in part to “the problem of ideology,” as Stuart Hall termed it, and the ways ideological concepts become a material issues once they are “articulated to the field of political and social forces and to the struggles between difference forces at stake.” The Marxist analysis within Silk and Andrews’ explication of PCS sees the body, like culture, not as a “superstructural” result of the “base” determinations of class, but a contextually-specific cultural nexus inscribed by social and political forces: the body as a culturally constructed articulation of contentious ideologies and power relations. While it is reasonable to link the intents and objectives of PCS scholarship with preceding critiques by Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and others of the “vulgar materialism” of economic determinist Marxian analyses, PCS scholarship locate physical culture and the body at the center of their analyses of the materiality of culture, ideology and capitalist relations of production.²⁶

Studying the contextual articulations of physical culture and the body allows me to approach “physical culture” as, historically, using the words of scholar Patricia Vertinsky, “cultural practices in which the physical body—the way it moves, is represented, has meanings assigned to it, and is imbued with power—is central.” At its root, Silk and Andrews explain, PCS is the “the critical and theoretical analysis of

²⁵ Michael L. Silk and David L. Andrews, “Toward a Physical Cultural Studies,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 1(2011): 4-35.

²⁶ Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 2(1986): 28–44; Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” *New Left Review* 1/82(1973): 3-16; E.P. Thompson, “Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Phillistines,” *The New Reasoner* 1(1957): 105-143.

physical culture, in all its myriad forms,” a project for broadening the sociological and cultural study of sport to include practices such as health, dance, and movement practices dependent on the active body. PCS scholarship seeks, according to Andrews, a “contextually based understanding of the corporeal practices, discourses, and subjectivities through which active bodies become organized, represented, and experienced in relation to the operations of social power.” In relation to active body-focused fields such as kinesiology and sport sociology and sport studies, PCS advances the cultural study of physical culture in ways that highlight the power relations implicated within active body practices and the inherently politicized nature of conducting such contextualized research. In a way, PCS furthers scholar Bryan Turner’s call for studying the body as “a system of signs which stand for an express relations of power,” allowing for such critical study while highlighting the material and contextual consequence of seeing the body as a system of signs.²⁷

As a historical dissertation rooted in this particular PCS sensibility, this study focuses on understandings and idealizations of embodiment within specific historical contexts and their contextual relations. This focus on “past” contexts through a historical narrative is a departure from the preponderance of preceding PCS dissertations which, for the most part, have tended to be historically-rooted studies contemporary iterations and present contexts of physical culture. The foundation of

²⁷ See David L. Andrews, “Kinesiology’s Inconvenient Truth and the Physical Cultural Studies Imperative,” *Qwest* 1(2008): 46-63; Silk and Andrews, “Toward a Physical Cultural Studies,” 6; For an introduction to some of the preceding works that called for a “Physical Cultural Studies” approach, see Jennifer Hargreaves and Patricia Vertinsky, *Physical Culture, Power, and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Alan G. Ingham, “Toward a Department of Physical Cultural Studies and an End to Tribal Warfare,” in *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education, and Sport*, ed. Juan-Miguel Fernandez-Balbo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 157-182; Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1996), 27.

PCS in Marxist cultural analysis offers a fruitful grounding for studying how cultural ideas (for example, the imagining of garden city planned communities) become material expressions within specific contextual sets of capitalist relations, and PCS students and scholars have long utilizing historically-grounded theories and concepts such as Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus." To date, however, PCS dissertations and analysis have tended to begin their analyses from a contemporary, ethnographically-interrogated problem space or topic.²⁸ While this dissertation is undeniably presentist in its political motivations and reasons for examining garden city history, the goal is to incorporate PCS principles with theories, concepts, and literatures emanating from the historical discipline, and examine historical contexts outside the reach of ethnographic methods. The makeup and trajectory of the PCS project has perhaps been impacted by its emergence as an academic critique of the sociology of sport field, arguing for a "complementary field of study" and expansion of the range of empirical sites in which everyday physical cultural practices—things like leisure and recreation practices, dance, and discourses of health and physical movement—can be studied in terms of their articulation of power relations.²⁹ Nonetheless, the continuing engagement of PCS research and thought with fields of study and disciplines out of

²⁸ There are examples of PCS dissertations with chapters devoted to particularly important historical contexts. See, as just a few examples, Jacob James Bustad, "Right to the Active City: Public Recreation and Urban Governance in Baltimore" (PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 2014), 42-150; Joy Bauer Olimpo, "Contemplating Survival: Sport History, Kinesiology, and the Academy" (master's thesis, University of Maryland, 2012); Jaime R. Deluca, "Exercising social class privilege: Examining the practices and processes defining upper-middle class swimming club culture" (PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 2010).

²⁹ Silk and Andrews, "Toward a Physical Cultural Studies," 6, 8-9; Michael D. Giardina and Joshua I. Newman, "What is this 'Physical' in Physical Cultural Studies?" *Sociology of Sport Journal* 1(2011): 36-63; Michael D. Giardina and Joshua I. Newman, "Physical Cultural Studies and Embodied Research Acts," *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies* 6(2011): 523-534; David L. Andrews and John W. Loy, "British Cultural Studies and Sport: Past Encounters and Future Possibilities," *Quest* 45(1993): 255-276.

sociology, sport studies, and cultural studies is important to the vitality and growth of the project as a whole. With a background of undergraduate and graduate studies in academic history departments, and a desire to further develop my skills as historically-focused scholar, I hope to further the engagement between PCS and the historical discipline, as well as related fields of study such as environmental and urban history.

There are important PCS-influenced works that examine specific historical topics and contexts and demonstrate the project's wide historical breadth, including fields and topics beyond the study of strictly sporting practices and cultures. To date, the work of Patricia Vertinsky, Jeffrey Montez de Oca's book *Discipline and Indulgence*, Damion Thomas' *Globetrotting*, and Josh Newman and Michael Giardina's chapter on the historical significance of automobile culture within the American sporting imagination remain notable PCS-related scholarship that analyze wholly historical contexts. Other scholars linked to PCS have published influential histories of physical cultural practices, or works on topics related to physical culture that are deeply historically rooted. They offer a more theoretically-nuanced, critical approach to studying the historical of physical cultural practices than previous social histories of the role and presence of sporting and recreational practices in community planning and building.³⁰ With that said, there is a relative dearth of distinctly historical PCS scholarship, evidenced in the recently published *Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies* in which a chapter is devoted to "historicizing" the

³⁰ See Wilma J. Pesavento, "Sport and Recreation in the Pullman Experiment, 1880-1900," *Journal of Sport History* 2 (1982): 38-62.

intellectual development of PCS rather than elucidating the role of historical analysis with the project or the “history” of PCS historical literature.³¹ Jeffrey Montez de Oca’s book, studying the militarization and media portrayal of Cold War college football, stands as perhaps the clearest example of a PCS-inspired historical monograph, with Newman and Giardina’s discussion of automobile cultural history serving as a historical backdrop to their particular ethnographic inquiry into Southern NASCAR sporting culture. De Oca’s focus on how college football during the Cold War period functioned as an institution culturally implicated with the development of consumer capitalism, media technology and the military-industrial complex illustrates the parameters of a PCS-influenced history of sporting practices.³² In de Oca’s explicit attention to sport, however, there remains a need to expand the scope of PCS historical inquiry, and explore how a PCS history might look like in conversation with fields such as environment history, urban history, and the history of community planning.

The discussions, thus far, elucidate the interdisciplinary, inter-field, theoretical and historiographical spaces this dissertation attempts to relate. As a historical study,

³¹ See Damion L. Thomas, *Globetrotting: African American Athletes and Cold War Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Patricia A. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990); Patricia A. Vertinsky and Sherry McKay, eds, *Disciplining Bodies in the Gymnasium: Memory, Monument, Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power, and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986); Richard S. Gruneau, *Class, Sports, and Social Development* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1999); Patricia Vertinsky and Gavin Weedon, “Historicizing Physical Cultural Studies,” in Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and Holly Thorpe, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 15-23.

³² Joshua I. Newman and Michael D. Giardina, *Sport, Spectacle, and NASCAR Nation: Consumption and the Cultural Politics of Neoliberalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jeffrey Montez de Oca, *Discipline and Indulgence: College Football, Media, and the American Way of Life during the Cold War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

I seek to advance and expand the presence of politically-engaged historical analyses within the developing PCS project, an existing canon that, to date, is largely composed of sociological and cultural analyses of the contemporary societies and, to a lesser extent, interrogations of historical contexts. As a history of the international garden city movement from the vantage of PCS inquiry, the dissertation underscores the importance of the body within an area of inquiry that, to date, has largely been confined to questions of urban planning, intellectual history, and social history. As a historical study informed by approaches used by embodied environmental historians, the dissertation places the topic of garden city in conversation with nuanced studies of the historical interactions between bodies and environments, helping the study of garden cities to expand beyond traditional questions of urban planning development and housing reform. As a topic that continues to resonate beyond the academic realm and into the world of international housing policy and initiatives for creating healthier, sustainable living environments, I examine the history of international garden city planning to inform contemporary discussions of housing reform and highlight the role of cultural biopolitics in assuming the healthfulness of planned built environments.

A “Cultural Materialist” History of Garden City Planning

An important historical and theoretical predicament emerged when I began to study the historical ideas of the planners and proponents of the international garden city movement, and particularly the embodied dimensions of their community

designs, guidelines and town layouts: how was I to capture the historical processes through which the planners' designs and spatial guidelines for the material communities were dialectically shaped by the planners' imagined "healthiest" ways of living? From what ideological sources did these planners derive their ideals and conceptions of health, nature, and healthier, natural living? How should I conceptualize these historical and dialectical processes linking the ideational (the realm of ideas) with material forces and social relations? In the case of the transatlantic transfer of English garden city ideas into American garden city planning and the federal greenbelt town program, those who advocated or aided in the design and planning of the communities often referenced cultural ideas and sources that served to buttress their own constructions of ideal health and natural spaces. By seeking to reform the housing, social, and public health conditions of contemporary industrial conurbations and degraded rural districts, garden city planners invoked inventions of an idyllic, pre-industrial past as part of their critique of industrial, urban capitalism. The garden city, in other words, was to symbolize the planners' challenge to the housing conditions of industrial capitalism. This requires a historical framework capable of capturing the dialectical interactions between the realms of the cultural, ideational and material, as a way of illuminating how each garden city community was planned as a material nexus of cultural values, ideals and practices.

The articulation of ideas, as British cultural scholar Raymond Williams reminded us, has long been a historically complex and contextually specific process. In the 1970s, Williams elucidated the historical conditioning of "keywords" (terms such as "health", "nature", and "culture", for example): familiar terms imbued with

meaning dialectically contingent on the context and power relations in which they are enunciated, and entailing residual meanings derived from the past. By this Williams was not implying that language and terms simply evolve in some historical teleology, but that keywords are articulations of cultural signification contingent upon the historical conditions of their expression. As cultural studies scholars Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meghan Morris rightfully point out, “[f]or Williams the point was not merely that the meanings of words change over time but that they change in relationship to changing political, social, and economic situations and needs.”³³ Keeping this understanding of the historical and cultural construction of “keywords” in mind, the ideas and plans of garden city planners can be understood as comprising simultaneously imagined and material dimensions, with the resultant communities imbued with historically-specific conceptions of health and nature through the designation of various community spaces for specific purposes and intentions, the use of certain materials and architectural styles within community’s actual buildings, and the preservation of specific “natural” spaces for their perceived healthful qualities.

In his classic 1977 text of Marxist cultural analysis *Marxism and Literature*, Williams elucidated a theory of the relations between culture and historical materialism. He termed this approach “cultural materialism”: the study of cultural signification in terms of how its distinct material elements were historically linked to

³³ Williams, *Keywords*; Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meghan Morris, *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013). For an introduction to the application of Williams’ “Keywords” approach to language and cultural history, see Jeff Wallace, Rod Jones and Sophie Nield, *Raymond Williams Now: Knowledge, Limits, and the Future* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

capitalist relations of production. With a background in literary theory, Williams sought to place “different forms of Marxist thinking”—referring to the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the cultural critiques of scholars from the Frankfurt School, the neo-Marxism of Lukács and Sartre, and the cultural Marxism of not only E.P. Thompson but Stuart Hall and those related to British Cultural Studies—in relation “with other forms of thinking,” opening “the subsequent way to critique and contribution” by fostering a rethinking of the dominant concepts of Marxist analysis, namely culture, language, and ideology. *Marxism and Literature* was in many ways a culmination of theoretical concepts Williams had developed over the years, specifically his uses of Gramsci to complicate economic determinist interpretations of the Marxian base-superstructure metaphor in order to study culture as sets of meanings, practices, and values “which are not merely abstract but...are organized and lived.” For Williams, culture was and is not composed of “objects” determined by an economic base, but contextual “practices” inextricably shaped by complicated material relations within hegemonic systems of power. He studied cultural signification in its historical relation to the “dominant and effective” sets of meaning and values within a particular society and time period.³⁴

Scholar Marie Moran and others have recently interpreted Williams’ cultural materialism, beyond the scope of literary analysis, as a paradigm for studying the

³⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 5; Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” 3-16. In many important ways, Williams’ explication of cultural materialism as a mode of Marxist cultural analysis was a development from his pathbreaking reconceptualization of culture as entailing “a whole way of life” in previous works. See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1960); Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965). Chapter one of this dissertation is wholly devoted to explicating cultural materialism as a historical framework, so I am refraining from further providing the related source material until those pages.

“power of ideas in their material context” and the ways such ideas become articulated within the “cultural political economy of capitalism.”³⁵ In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams framed cultural materialism as a theoretical approach based firmly within the historical materialist tradition, the apotheosis of his work studying the materiality of cultural and literary production. Moran expands this understanding, applying cultural materialism as a paradigmatic means of examining the material and productive power of cultural ideas within historical contexts. Far from Terry Eagleton’s assertion of William’s cultural materialism as more “intuitive” than cogent, Moran explicates the paradigm to show how historical ideas can be emphasized within “a materialist account of social change,” as constitutive, material elements within the social contexts of capitalist production. Cultural ideas, in other words, are not only historically constructed and culturally contingent, but are lived in dialectical relation to what Moran refers to as the “social logic of capitalism,” the “active, living and meaningful logic” mobilized by individuals and groups that “manifests, embodies, rationalises and normalises the principle of capital accumulation.” As a historical framework, this interpretation of cultural materialism allows one to study historical and cultural ideas as not only conditioned by their contexts, but serving to socially and culturally reproduced the relations of capitalism.³⁶

³⁵ Christian Fuchs, “Raymond Williams’ Communicative Materialism,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6 (2017): 744-762.

³⁶ Marie Moran, *Identity and Capitalism* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2015), 7-8, 59-69; Terry Eagleton, “Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams,” *New Left Review* 1/95 (1976): 3-23. There is an extensive literature on “cultural materialism” that will be noted in chapter one, but for a recent introduction beyond Williams and Moran, see Jim McGuigan, *Neoliberal Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

In this dissertation, I incorporate cultural materialism as a theoretical framework for capturing the productive and material power of ideas of health and nature involved in the planning and creation of international garden city movement communities. Williams', and subsequently Moran's, theoretical development of cultural materialism allows an examination of how contextually interrelated cultural ideas, particularly those concerning health, nature and planned built environments/spaces of living, were not only contextually specific and imbued with relations of power, but entailed a complex mixture of what Williams called "dominant, residual, and emergent" cultural traditions and values that subsequently became interwoven in the material creation of garden cities. The framework helps resolve questions as to the historical subjectivities of garden city planners and their dialectical relation to the garden city ideals. In Moran's interpretation of Williams' cultural materialism, historical ideas are practices constitutive of a group or individual's lived experience, cultural context, and relation to the capitalist mode. Since ideas are embedded within material processes of life, the individual's subjectivity depends not just in terms of their historical laboring activities but their "ability to think about, plan and reflect on this world communicatively, that is socially, in tandem with the active laboring capacity." As firmly rooted in the tradition of historical materialism and cultural Marxist concepts of agency and experience, cultural materialism offers a means, alternative to Althusserian structuralism, of overcoming theoretical divides between idealism and economism. Consciousness remains a fundamental concept in a cultural materialist historical analysis—though complicated and reformulated through the insight of Gramsci and

his writings on hegemony. This, in this dissertation, the study becomes how the ideas of historical thinkers and planners were transmuted into the material designs and organization of garden city communities.³⁷

This utilization of cultural materialism as a historical framework is productively complicated by the social history approaches of the embodied environmental historiography. As its central research questions concern the historical relations between contextual ideas of health, nature, and built environments, the dissertation is informed and indebted to embodied environmental histories that highlight how people historically interacted and understood their natural surroundings through embodied activities such as work, as well as how environments have often held an agentic, powerful relation to people's lived experience.³⁸ The social construction of ideas and perceptions of "nature", as historian Carolyn Merchant demonstrates, is an issue that has long been interwoven within historical relations of power.³⁹ Historian Karl Jacoby, in his study of late nineteenth and early twentieth-

³⁷ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121-7; Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 63; Andrew Milner, *Cultural Materialism* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 101. In my discussion of "consciousness," I am writing firstly in reference to Stuart Hall's explicated "problem of ideology": how ideas can come to hold a material force in everyday life. See Hall, "The Problem of Ideology," 28-44. Importantly, I am also writing of "consciousness" and Marxian subjectivity in the historical materialist vein of the British historian E.P. Thompson, who conceptualized working class consciousness as an active, relational and historical process that can be discerned by an analysis of cultural lived experience. See E.P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963). For accounts of Marxian debates over the divide between idealism and economism, agency and structure, see Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms," *Media, Culture & Society* 2(1980): 57-72; E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory: or an Orrery of Errors* (London: Merlin Press, 1995); Raymond Williams, "Marxism, Structuralism and Literary Analysis," *New Left Review* I/121 (1981): 51-66.

³⁸ See White, *The Organic Machine*; Sellers, "Thoreau's Body"; J.R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Linda Nash, "The Agency of Nature or the Nature of Agency?" *Environmental History* 10(2005): 67-69; Ted Steinberg, "Down to Earth: Nature, Agency, and Power in History," *American Historical Review* 107(2002): 798-820.

³⁹ Merchant, *The Death of Nature*; Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*.

century American conservation regulations, argued that people's understandings and interactions with nature comprised a "moral ecology", an alternative "vision of nature 'from the bottom up'" in oppositional response to the "elite discourse" of conservation legislation. The conservation legislation is conceptualized as a kind of historically static "base" of elitist discourse in opposition to the vibrant and agentic "moral ecology" of ordinary people.⁴⁰ Ideas, in other words, hold power in part because human agents make and remake their meaning throughout history, and are present and active within these processes.

This dissertation's analysis, however, deviates from a strictly social history approach by focusing on the cultural and ideological values and meaning imbued within the design and planning of garden city communities, rather than the historically complex and contradictory subjective experiences of the residents as they actually lived within garden city communities and responded to the planning forms in their everyday activities and discourse. The spotlight here is on specifically the historical processes and the planners' cultural ideas that became imbued within garden city plans, in order to excavate their role and idealization of the body and physical culture within those processes of imagining, designing, and planning the idealized built environments.⁴¹ By examining the historical processes and relations

⁴⁰ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1-10; E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, no. 50(1971): 76-136; see also Carl J. Griffin and Iain Robertson, "Moral Ecologies: Conservation in Conflict in Rural England," *History Workshop* 82(2016): 1-25.

⁴¹ In "base", I refer to Raymond Williams' important article on "base" and "superstructure" within Marxist cultural analysis, and how he argued for a more critical understanding of the complex processes destabilizing the determinative force of the base in relation to the superstructural. See Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," 3-16.

involved in the community planning, my analysis destabilizes the assumed determinative force of “base” and “superstructural” conditions, and introduces the role of the body and “biopolitics” within their historical imagining and emergence of garden cities.

Regardless, as an approach formed in part from the Marxian tradition of historical materialism, cultural materialism remains a valuable and illuminate framework for historical and cultural analysis, particularly as it presents a productive engagement with recent ecological Marxist reinterpretations of the Marx-Engels canon. By ecological Marxism, I refer to contemporary theoretical reformulations of Marx’s original writings positing that Marx’s materialist conception of history developed in dialectical relation to a materialist conception of nature. As noted scholar John Bellamy Foster asserts, ecological Marxism explains how “socialism has influenced the development of ecological thought and practice, while ecology has informed socialist thought and practice.” The relationship between materially understanding socialism and ecology, in other words, “has been complex, interdependent, and dialectical.” Returning to Marx’s manuscripts and assertions in *Capital* of the labor processes of life as “the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and nature...,” Foster and ecological Marxists conceptualize the historical labor activities as at once social and natural processes, and people’s alienation from the processes of production as also their alienation from nature.⁴² By

⁴² I am hesitant to cite and unpack the canon of ecological Marxism here, as it concerns a large degree of the first chapter. For now, for sources on the essential ideas of ecological Marxism, see John Bellamy Foster, “Marxism and Ecology: Common Fonts of a Great Transition,” *Monthly Review* 67 (2015), <https://monthlyreview.org/2015/12/01/marxism-and-ecology/>; John Bellamy Foster, *Marx’s Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 155-63; Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

incorporating ecological Marxist insight, I am able to construct a theoretical framework in one sense rooted in the tradition of Marxist historiography, yet also nuanced in its approach to nature at once cultural and material in historical and capitalist contexts. At a time in which scholars, including within PCS, follow nascent, academically fashionable theoretical reformulations—notably New Materialist theorizations of anthropocentrism, the relations between nature, culture, and the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman—Marie Moran’s and cultural scholar Jim McGuigan’s nuanced interpretations of Raymond Williams’ cultural materialism offers a useful historical framework, in tandem with ecological Marxist insight, for studying cultural ideas as dialectically linked to the material processes of life and the political economies of capitalist production, all without reifying historical constructed binaries between nature and culture, the body and environment.⁴³

A Garden City History of “Biopolitics” and “Nostalgia”

⁴³ For sources on New Materialist approaches, see Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); William E. Connelly, “The ‘New Materialism’ and the Fragility of Things,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41 (2013): 399-412; Brad Millington and Brian Wilson, “Contested Terrain and Terrain that Contests: Donald Trump, Golf’s Environmental Politics, and a Challenge to Anthropocentrism in Physical Cultural Studies,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 19 February 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690216631541>; “Physical Cultural Studies and New Materialism Symposium,” University of Maryland School of Public Health, 30 September 2016, accessed 9 August 2017, <https://sph.umd.edu/event/physical-culture-and-new-materialism-symposium>. For a source on Marie Moran and Jim McGuigan’s collaborative discussions of cultural materialism, see Jim McGuigan and Marie Moran, “Raymond Williams and Sociology,” *The Sociological Review* 62 (2014): 167-88.

The body figured centrally in the objectives of garden city planners and leaders, and occupies an essential position in this cultural materialist historical analysis. As they sought to redesign the relations between built environment form and embodied living for the purposes of improving the health of the urban working classes through their tools of town planning, garden city planners were ultimately idealizing a kind of healthy form of embodiment that reproduced and reified their own class, race, and gender positions as value-laden elements of the garden city community's organization and arrangement. As the dissertation will show, these planners did not consider the politics of their own "habitus", nor its dialectical relation to their conceptions of health, nature, and the body's imagined role within a planned environment organized according to their values. The planners themselves were concurrently products of the bourgeois values of capitalist society and, to use Eric Hobsbawm's words, were "subjectively pursuing strategies" with cultural ideas that were part and parcel of the capitalist ideological context. The planners presumed the healthfulness of their garden city communities in terms of how the built environments would serve as architectural and spatial alternatives to the inhumane contemporary housing conditions of urban industrial capitalism, but also as training grounds for the cultivation of "healthy" social and physical bodies.⁴⁴ By linking

⁴⁴ By "habitus" I refer to Bourdieu's concept of how the historical individual, the human agent, is simultaneously a product of societal structures and residuals from the past, but also a subjective strategizing activities and changes within a "field" of contextual relations. Bourdieu's habitus, as Hobsbawm explained, is a concept for understanding social reproduction, a theoretical means of understanding human activities within that assumed "space" between the base and the superstructure, between humans making their own history, but in conditions generated not from their own "free will." See Eric Hobsbawm, "Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Sociology and Social History," *New Left Review* 101 (2016): 37-47; Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

health to bourgeois definitions of the ideal environment, however, such plans rested on politicized imagining of a garden city habitus: a prescribed “way of operating” instilled through the actual living and experience of the community forms, and which reproduced, rather than challenged, established forms of “healthy living.”

By planning their community layouts so as to install the deemed “proper” conditions for healthier, natural ways of living for their national populations, garden city movement planners in Britain and the United States approached each project as a “biopolitical” built environment, designed to implicitly regulate and manage everyday life through the seduction of the community’s prescribed form and its reproduction of social relations. By “biopolitics,” I refer to Italian Marxist Paolo Virno’s interpretation of Michel Foucault’s 1976 lectures on biopower at the Collège de France: a historical shift in modern power, through which political and governmental institutions sought to regulate and administer the lives of national populations: the political management of the everyday, biological processes of life, through which the maintenance people’s bodies became the subjects of modern power.⁴⁵ It was in the late 1970s that Foucault began discussing his concept of “governmentality” as a way of understanding the rise of a political power comprised of “techniques and procedures for directing human behavior.”⁴⁶ Foucauldian biopolitics expands this

⁴⁵ Paolo Virno, “An Equivocal Concept: Biopolitics,” in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, eds. Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 269; Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador, 1997), 239-247; See also Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2004). For insight on the relations between biopolitical strategies and racial discourses, see Sokthan Yang, *The Biopolitics of Race: State Racism and U.S. Immigration* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

⁴⁶ Nikolas Rose, Pat O’Malley, and Mariana Valverde, “Governmentality,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 2 (2006): 83-104; Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984*, Vol. 1 (New York: New Press, 1997), 82.

discussion to emphasize how the biological processes of life came to be under the watchful eye of this political power. As biopower scholar Nikolas Rose explains, biopolitics refers to "...the task of the management of life in the name of the well-being of the population as a vital order and of each of its living subjects," the study of how life processes are managed and regulated through various technologically-based strategies, mechanisms, and guidelines from those in positions of institutional, governmental power or coercion.⁴⁷ This definition is indebted to a Foucauldian understanding that "a new technology of power," a new "nondisciplinary power" emerged in by the eighteenth century, applied to "the living man, to man-as-living-being," a "biopolitics" seeking to "rule a multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished." As scholar Thomas Lenke explains, the history of intellectual discourse on biopolitics and biopolitical strategies stretches at least to late nineteenth-century Europe, and was subsequently used by such regimes as German National Socialism to promote eugenics and racial hygiene objectives and naturalize national populations as "self-enclosed communities with a common genetic heritage." Biopolitical scholars, following the work of Foucault, Virno, Rose, Thomas Lenke and others, utilize the concept for historical critique: to study how institutions/groups in power in history aimed to regulate and manage the biological and life processes of populations.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Nikolas Rose, "The Politics of Life Itself," *Theory, Culture & Society* 18(2001): 2-30.

⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, "The Political Investment of the Body," in Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco, eds., *The Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 100; Thomas Lenke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 3-5; Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze, "Introduction: Biopolitics: An Encounter," in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, eds. Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 2. For monographs that provide useful insight on

In this dissertation, I utilize a Foucauldian-based conception of “biopolitics,” drawn from his works on biopower and governmentality, in order to study the complex ways garden city planning sought to create and structure their built environments with particular, prescribed environmental, aesthetic, and physical cultural relations between material elements (for example, architecture, planned park or open space, organized sporting spaces and playgrounds) so as to create the conditions for the cultivation and development of ideal, healthy bodies. This particular deployment of biopolitics expands from feminist and bioethics literatures, in which scholars use the conceptual approach to interrogate not only institutional surveillance of bodies and the transformation of biological processes as objects of governmental regulation, but the reproduction of bodily surveillance through everyday practices (social and physical cultural) that require citizens themselves to police their own subjectivities.⁴⁹ The benefit in operationalizing biopolitics within my dissertation’s analysis, alongside with prescribed forms of physical culture, is it allows me to study the complexity of cultural forms implanted into the plans for

Foucauldian conceptions of biopolitics, see Vanessa Lemm and Miguel Vatter, eds., *The Government of Life: Foucault, Biopolitics, and Neoliberalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014); Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin A. Winckler, *Governing China's Population: from Leninist to Neoliberal Biopolitics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Patricia Stapleton and Andrew Byers, eds. *Biopolitics and Utopia: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Nikolas S. Rose, *Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Matthew Coleman and Kevin Grove, “Biopolitics, Biopower, and the Return of Sovereignty,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009): 489-507. For research on the relation between biopolitics and public health reforms, see Jeremy R. Youde, *Biopolitical Surveillance and Public Health in International Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Jan Wright and Valerie Harwood, eds. *Biopolitics and the ‘Obesity Epidemic’: Governing Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁴⁹ Vandana Shiva and Ingunn Moser, eds., *Biopolitics: a Feminist and Ecological Reader on Biotechnology* (Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books, 1995); Catherine Mills, *Futures of Reproduction: Bioethics and Biopolitics* (New York: Springer, 2011); Joana Zylinska, “The Universal Acts: Judith Butler and the Biopolitics of Immigration,” *Cultural Studies* 4 (2004): 523-537; Shannon Jette, Krishna Bhagat, and David L. Andrews, “Governing the Child-Citizen: ‘Let’s Move!’ as National Biopedagogy,” *Sport, Education and Society* 8 (2016): 1109-1126.

garden cities and their utility as the planners sought the structuring of particular suburban and environmental spaces and social and biological maintenance of decentralized urban populations through modern and romanticized forms of activity and interaction with natural landscapes.

Such interpretations of biopolitics are engendered from a Foucauldian conception of modern power, entailing, using Nancy Fraser's words, "local, continuous, productive, capillary, and exhaustive," strategies to objectify, administer, predict, and prescribe people's everyday activities.⁵⁰ It is a productive power, Foucault argued, because it induces "contextually-specific ways of knowing": it persuades people, provides forms and markers of identity.⁵¹ This kind of modern power, in other words, expresses itself through "disciplinary institutions" with the objective of micromanaging the everyday, minute iterations of the "social body": the regulation of whole populations and national entities rather than distinct individuals. In its historical location, the international garden city movement straddles between what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call the historical epochs of "Disciplinary Society" and "Society of Control." By this I mean the planning of garden cities entailed mechanisms of modern power illustrative of "Disciplinary Society"—the use of institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals, and prisons to regulate social

⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 23-25; see also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1979).

⁵¹ Andrew Byers, "American Bodies in a Time of War: The Militarized Body as a Utopian Space and Biopolitical Project for the State," in *Biopolitics and Utopia: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, eds. Patricia Stapleton and Andrew Byers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 14; Nikki Sullivan, "Foucault's Body," in *Routledge Handbook of Body Studies*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (New York: Routledge, 2012), 106-116.

customs and regulate behavior—by relying on the centralized, yet locally specific positions of the planners to prescribe and design the built environment and structure its healthful aspects. Yet, as the dissertation will show, by prescribing each garden city as a “healthy” and socially and biologically regenerative built environment, the planners employed biopolitical regulatory practices of the “Society of Control” period: life as “an object of power” and biopolitical strategies as reproducing life and the relations of power. Indeed, their structuring of garden cities as products of architectural modernity resulted in each planned community functioning as a “project of subject formation...the molding and shaping of subjectivity understood as life...” The planning of material garden communities was at once the planning of healthy bodies, linking such biopolitical strategies to the power relations of historical contexts—as Foucault wrote, “[power relations] invest [the body], mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out task, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs...”⁵²

Garden city planners mobilized biopolitical strategies within the community projects through a “nostalgia” of an imagined past: a contradiction conjoining “pre-industrial” and “modern” arrangements through the restoration of healthy physical and social conditions. In other words, the planners’ expression of their ideal healthy embodiments, through their community plans, synthesized the tension between their engagement with modern conditions of life and their idealization of pre-industrial social and environmental spaces of living. By “nostalgia,” I refer to scholar Ruth Austin Miller’s definition: a “mode of engagement with the world that allows thought

⁵² Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Biopolitical Production,” in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, eds. Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 215-7; Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 4.

and life to coexist" through a "sentimental yearning for a unitary, imagined past that promises, in turn, a flat, disengaged, and impossible future..." Miller's conception of nostalgia allows me to see it as an emboldening element with a modern biopolitical strategy, serving as a cultural bridge between the seemingly contradictory realms of thought and material practice. As Stephanie Coontz explains, nostalgic longing to return to some mythical lost "golden age" have historically been attempts to resuscitate traditional, gender-bound practices and values as "an ahistorical amalgam of structures, values, and behaviors that never coexisted in the same time and place."⁵³ Within this dissertation, the planners' particular sense of pastoral "nostalgia"—longings to use the power of modern planning and technology to return people to feminized "natural" and bucolic spaces as an antidote for the discontents of modern urban life—imbued their planning strategies and calibrated their allegiance to particular "naturally healthy" spaces of nature so that their biopolitical objectives transmuted into material community layouts, architectural regulations, and imaginings of embodiment.⁵⁴ By cloaking their biopolitical aims with nostalgic yearnings for an invented past of bodily health and unity with nature—often an invented past closely aligned to national narratives of health and empire—garden city planning "hid" their mechanisms of power under backward-looking critiques of

⁵³ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 2.

⁵⁴ Ruth Austin Miller, *The Biopolitics of Embryos and Alphabets: A Reproductive History of the Nonhuman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6-7; Ekaterina Kalinina, "Becoming Patriots in Russia: Biopolitics, Fashion, and Nostalgia," *Nationalist Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 45 (2017): 8-24. For insight into the historical relation between nostalgia and constructions of nature, see Jennifer K. Ladino, *Reclaiming Nostalgia: Longing for Nature in American Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012). For a discussion of Garden city planners' nostalgia for a mythologized British pre-industrial past, see Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 1-10.

industrial capitalism and its effects on national health.⁵⁵ This historical process did not necessarily “determine” the future behaviors of residents—as Norbert Elias explained, cultural habits and behaviors are not historically determined by some central power core, but are rather integral to historical processes influenced in some form by power structures—but rather served as an ideological glue holding together the regulatory intentions of modern biopower with the desire to control community design and health standards so as to reproduce dominant, historically-based racial nationalist conceptions of health and ideal national livelihoods.⁵⁶

A “Spatialized” Garden City Biopolitics

The “nostalgic biopolitics” of garden city planners functioned as a kind of town planning strategy, as the planners and movement proponents imagined and structured the social spaces and practices of the new communities, imbuing their form with culturally constructed values of health, nature, and what constitutes natural living. For this approach to space, I conceptualize planned built environments (such as garden cities) as, in the words of urban scholar Peter Ambrose, “dynamic” forms that constantly undergo “purposeful” changes ranging from the “barely perceptible and inevitable” to the “very dramatic contentious.” Garden city discourse on space, as David Pinder reminds us, was essentially a discourse for what Michel De Certeau called a “Concept City”: a “city” founded upon its own “utopian and urbanistic

⁵⁵ Foucault wrote in his *History of Sexuality* how modern power’s “success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.” See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 86.

⁵⁶ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

discourse” that produces the space and seeks to subdue “the physical, mental, and political pollutions” threatening to “compromise” the urban vision’s rationale and layout.⁵⁷ The body figured centrally within this history of spatial production, but it also requires a correlated theoretical understanding of how space comes to be produced in historical capitalist societies.

The planning and structuring of planned communities in garden city history occurred in a historically contingent and politicized process dialectically related to the contextual mode and relations of production. The Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre recognized space as, borrowing the words of PCS scholar Michael Friedman, “not a neutral object of Cartesian depictions,” but one that dialectically structures and is structured by social and power relations. By unpacking the spatial dimensions of social relationships, Lefebvre illustrated how the historical processes of producing space are inevitably linked to relations of production and the reproduction of social relationships through the organization and regulation of spatial practices (the construction of built environments and the prescription of deemed “healthy” activities bolstered by the environment’s form).⁵⁸ Geographer Neil Smith expanded from Lefebvre’s theoretical vantage point, explaining how, in placing understandings of natural environments in historical context, the “development of the

⁵⁷ Peter Ambrose, *Urban Process and Power* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 5-6; David Pinder, *Visions of the City: Utopianism, Power and Politics in Twentieth-Century Urbanism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 85; De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 94.

⁵⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume 1, Introduction*, trans. John Moore (New York: Verso, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); Michael T. Friedman, “‘The Transparency of Democracy’: The Production of Washington’s National Park as a Late Capitalist Space,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 27(2010): 327-350. For an introduction to the writings of Henri Lefebvre, see Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

material landscape presents itself as a process of the production of nature”: the “production of nature” is fused with the production of space as themselves historical processes under capitalism.⁵⁹

With the works of Lefebvre, Smith and Williams expanding from Marxist historical analyses of capitalist production, Williams’ cultural materialism can be seen as complicating Lefebvre’s and Smith’s explications by offering a theoretically-guided, historically-minded approach for sifting through the complex and often contradictory ideas, values and traditions of cultural signification that become material imbued in the production of “natural” and “healthy” environments. Spaces, specifically garden city-inspired planned communities, can subsequently be studied as simultaneously historical, cultural and spatial phenomena structured by and reproducing social relationships that entail complex, materially-relevant cultural meaning.⁶⁰ Placing Williams’ cultural materialism in conversation with Lefebvre and Smith allows the dissertation to conceptualize cultural production in tandem with spatial production and the study of nature as a historical construction, allowing me as the author to then focus on the cultural articulation of bio-political strategies and

⁵⁹ Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 7-8, 49-51. See also Neil Smith, “Nature as Accumulation Strategy,” *Socialist Register* 43 (2006): 16-36. For a discussion of the relations between capital, the production of urban space, and the creation of more ecologically friendly built environments, see David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2013).

⁶⁰ I do not want to jump ahead in my explanation of Williams’ cultural materialism, as the notions of “dominant, residual, and emergent” cultural forms are explained in detail in chapter one. It is enough, for now, to say that Williams’ notions explain the complexity of cultural forms and the ways cultural meaning often entail contradictory forms. The reader can find Williams’ discussion of all of this in *Marxism and Literature*. See Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121-7.

constructions of ideas of race, gender and nationalism as themselves embedded within and shaped by and shaping cultural/spatial practices.⁶¹

Environmental historians Neil Maher and Matthew Klinge have offered useful spatial concepts for representing the historical interactions between society, culture, and nature as they have emerged within social experience. Their historical concepts of “landscape” and “place”, though applied to particular analyses of New Deal social welfare programs and the environmental history of Seattle, aid this dissertation by providing an understanding of how the spatial production of power is often entangled in both sociocultural and environmental relationships in ways that interweave historical memory with the planning of space. Landscape, for Maher, is a means of seeing human interactions with natural environments (through the prism of work and human laboring activities) as a fusion of social construction and ecology, and the natural world as at once tangibly natural elements (such as trees and soil) as well as entities imbued with socially construction of nature. Klinge’s conception of place, following geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, sees spaces of living as created by human agents and imbued with socially and historically-constructed meaning; as spatial practices where people’s memories and perceptions help organize the meaning of the space itself.⁶² Indeed, the defining of a “place,” as Doreen Massey reminds us,

⁶¹ For a discussion of the relations between race, place / space and nationalism, see Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose, eds., *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). See also Jan Penrose, “When all the Cowboys are Indians: The Nature of Race in All-Indian Rodeo,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (2003): 687-705; Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *National Performances: The Politics of Class, Race, and Space in Puerto Rican Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁶² Neil Maher, *Nature’s New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6; Matthew Klinge, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 4; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

involves the contesting of identities and the shaping of space through social relations.⁶³ Both landscape and place inform the dissertation's conceptualization of the planned community / built environment as at root historical constructions in relation to natural environments, as well as imbued with cultural meaning imparted through the strategies, guidelines and tools of town planners, designers and architects. Though the materiality of a nostalgic biopolitical ideals represents the central focus of analysis, understanding historical garden city communities as historically constructed places, shaped by human interactions, perceptions and ideas of nature, allows the dissertation to pursue an analysis that is at once natural, spatial, cultural and biopolitical.

Understanding the construction of space as contextually linked to cultural production and the (re)production of capitalist relations concurrently means that, at the experiential level of historical analysis, the designing of space and the real practices in constructing preconceived built environments were inherently imbued with social and power relations. More than seeing designed "objects" as simply communicating some form of cultural meaning, the producing and designing of space is an act of cultural politics.⁶⁴ Indeed, as Richard White succinctly put it, "Planning is an exercise of power..."⁶⁵ Garden city and greenbelt communities were ultimately spatial practices fashioned by values and ideas of idyllic space and landscape, with

⁶³ Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995): 182-192; Karen Sayer, *Country Cottages: A Cultural History* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 57.

⁶⁴ Paola Antonelli, ed., *Talk to Me: Design and the Communication between People and Objects* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art). For a discussion of the cultural politics of urban design, see Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen, eds., *From Socialist to Post-Socialist Cities: Cultural Politics of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Identity in Eurasia* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁶⁵ White, *The Organic Machine*, 64.

the organization of space conducted through instruments of design. This entails not only the underlying understanding of the dialectical relation between and the expressions of modern subjectivities, but of the embedded relations of power between planner, space, and imagined built environment. As urban design scholar Willow Lung-Amam explains, though community design standards and guidelines can appear as ideologically neutral mechanisms, they are imbued with social and cultural norms and expectations of what constitutes “good” or “appropriate” design. As cultural meanings and ideals become naturalized through design policies, they subsequently serve to privilege one cultural group’s sense of place and the meanings prescribed through the design guidelines governing the community’s development. It is more than understanding modern designing as entangled within social and historical contexts, but that the designed becomes an expression of social and cultural politics. The task becomes to scrutinize the social and cultural values and meaning contained within the designs of garden city communities in their productive relation to culture, nature and capitalism.⁶⁶

Moreover, just as community designs and guidelines are irrevocably linked to the social and cultural politics of their historical contexts, such processes of planning spaces as healthy built environments entails power relationships, through which the planners reproduce social and cultural relationships by preconceiving and organizing the community form with contextually-specific ideas of *proper* planning and what

⁶⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990); Willow Lung-Amam, “That ‘Monster House’ Is My Home: The Social and Cultural Politics of Design Reviews and Regulations,” *Journal of Urban Design* 18(2013): 222, 238; Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 6-10. I am approaching culture as a kind of “sign-system,” following philosopher Roland Barthes. See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1991).

should happen in structured spaces. This kind of planning of space into a structured form entails a process of coercion and an enacting of spatial control, as it requires developing a planning strategy for structuring specific spaces so that residents will be persuaded to perform certain activities and see their living spaces as sites of particular cultural meaning. As scholar Kim Dovey writes, “The built environment frames everyday life by offering certain spaces for programmed action, while closing other possibilities.”⁶⁷ Regardless of the intentions of garden city planners, their designs, guidelines, and regulations for garden city environments ultimately entailed wielding a planner’s power in organizing and creating the meaning of the built environment, correspondingly legitimizing their desires, vision, and cultural values as they related to the planned community. Just as urban planning has historically been utilized for accomplishing European colonizing objectives of spatial control in places such as colonial Africa, as well as the mobilizing of community models for British imperial objectives, garden city planning is understood in this dissertation as a historical issue involving the (re)production of power relationships through the particular structuring and imbuing of spaces with cultural values.⁶⁸ As this dissertation argues, if the history of international garden city movement planning was anything, it was at root the mobilization of bourgeois cultural constructions of health and nature and the

⁶⁷ Kim Dovey, *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 9-13.

⁶⁸ Ambe J. Njoh, “Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa,” *Planning Perspectives* 24(2009): 301-317; Liora Bigon, “Garden Cities in Colonial Africa: A Note on Historiography,” *Planning Perspectives* 28(2013): 477-485; R. K. Home, “Town Planning and Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire,” *Planning Perspectives* 5(1990): 23-37; Hugo Marcelo Zunino, “Power Relations in Urban Decision-making: Neo-liberalism, ‘Techno-politicians’ and Authoritarian Redevelopment in Santiago, Chile,” *Urban Studies* 43(2006): 1825-1846; William Cunningham Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

idealization of healthy bodies for the purposes of creating communities designed to biopolitically manage life and symbolize nostalgic visions ideal health through the “seduction” of the garden city prescribed form. The power to plan a garden city entailed the power to transmute bourgeois conceptions of health, nature, and urban and rural life into actual communities designed for “healthy living.”⁶⁹

Chapter Overview

The first chapter reviews the dissertation’s particular theoretical framework informed by theories of cultural materialism, ecological Marxism, and modern biopower, considering the important elements and potential historiographical problems in utilizing them towards examining the nostalgic biopolitics of garden city planning. I argue that recent interpretations of Raymond Williams’ cultural materialist approach to historical analysis—the study of “dominant,” “residual,” and “emergent” cultural ideas and forms of cultural signification in terms of their productive power and hegemonic relation to modes of capitalist production—offer a useful framework for capturing the ways garden city planners sought to build their communities by turning their idealized visions of healthy living into “practical,” material community and physical cultural forms. Combined recent ecological Marxist reinterpretations of capitalist alienation as a historical process concerns the body’s “metabolic” relation with not only labor but natural environments, this

⁶⁹ Kim Dovey conceptualizes “seduction” as a form of power, a “practice which manipulates the interests and desires of the subject.” The concept affords a means of seeing how the built form can shape people’s perception and cognition of architecture and the organized built environment. See Dovey, *Framing Places*, 11-12.

framework allows me to highlight the ways planned forms of biopower and biopolitics materialized through the designs, planning strategies, and guidelines of garden city planners. I begin my historical analysis by elucidating my theoretical framework in order to render transparent and reflect on the historical concepts and theoretical tools and lens employed within the historical analysis. This is not argue that my dissertation values theoretical constructs over the “clues” of lived experience I studied through my historical research, but rather to enrich the political and cultural complexity of the historical contexts and dialectically relate my own processes of representing the garden city planning past with this historical narrative.⁷⁰ The dissertation embraces, rather than bypasses, the insight of deconstructionist critiques of historiography and narrative representation, and uses chapter one to make my authorial processes of historical representation unconcealed.

Chapters two and four trace the embodied and physical cultural dimensions of garden city movement ideas in their British and American contexts, with chapter two focusing specifically on the cultural ideas of Sir Ebenezer Howard, the British stenographer and social reformer that garden city historians credit as the “inventor” of the internationally influential English garden city model, and chapter four dedicated to the particular cultural ideas of health, nature, and physical culture held by the planners, architects, and social thinkers associated with the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), the organization arguably most responsible for the incorporation of garden city movement ideas within American town planning.

⁷⁰ “Clues” here refers to Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg’s discussion of clues and myths in relation to historical analysis. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

Garden city historians have long framed Howard as a kind of historical sponge, a man whose penchant and curiosity for radical social ideas and passion for reforming the contemporary national crises of urban overcrowding and rural depopulation led him to absorb a multitude of social, scientific and religious ideas that he subsequently incorporated in his 1898 garden city treatise *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. As the self-proclaimed promoter of the movement in the United States, RPAA planners embraced, expanded, and refashioned garden city ideas, while incorporating their own unique approach to regional planning, within a particular early twentieth-century context of concern for not only urban congestion and overdevelopment, but the ordering of regional landscapes in relation to suburban built environments for the rational maintaining of white, middle class social arrangements and access to “natural” recreation. I interrogate the cultural milieu and contexts through which Howard and the American planners and architects of the RPAA developed their garden city ideas, focusing in chapter two on the body politics and problematic conceptions of health and nature that permeated nineteenth-century Victorian discourse on urbanity and the virtues of rural life, as well as the ways his garden city vision crystallized as a biopolitical strategy for the regeneration and regulation of British working class bodies. The goal of both chapters is to lay the historical groundwork for viewing the garden city movement as a movement that not only sought to address issues of social and biological health, but the regeneration and management of working class life, furthering ideologies of eugenics, racial nationalism, and modern, “civilized” physical culture in its quest to garner public and capital support.

Chapters three and five examine the complex incorporation of garden city movement ideas on health, nature, and physical culture through the creation of the first English garden city at Letchworth in 1903, and the RPAA's experiments in community planning in the 1920s at Sunnyside, New York and Radburn, New Jersey. Chapter three studies how the planning of Letchworth became a biopolitical strategy for the social and physical regeneration of British working class bodies, entailing a contradiction between the planners' nostalgia for pastoral and agricultural laboring pursuits and living arrangements and their intentions to restore such relations through modern technologies and planning. The planners' idealization of the healthy body and healthy physical culture functioned as a means of synthesizing this contradiction of modern and anti-modern objectives, by allowing for the prescription of spaces (such as an encircling belt of preserved agricultural land) where pastoral labor could be reinvigorate, as well as organized sporting and physical cultural practices within the community that reproduced bourgeois social relations. Chapter five examines the RPAA's plans and activities for wide scale regional planning with their incorporation of English garden city town designs, studying their embracing and reconfiguring of the garden city model in relation to their advocacy or regional projects such as conservationist and planner Benton MacKaye's Appalachian Trail. The point of chapter five is to highlight the biopolitical and nostalgic sensibility of RPAA town planning, as they laid out garden city-inspired planned communities with structured spaces for modern, landscaped leisure, recreation, and physical cultural practices, but with the overall goal of integrating the communities with an entirely redeveloped

region imagined in part through a nostalgia for the recreational and physical cultural healthfulness of wilderness spaces.

My objective is not necessarily to question much of the predominant historical understanding within garden city historiography, but rather to introduce and weave their biopolitical and physical cultural dimensions within the overall narrative of the garden city's emergence. Hopefully, the dissertation will persuade the reader to view the history of garden cities as a biopolitical history of spatial and environmental planning: historical contexts of a reformist nostalgia for the physical cultural qualities of particular natural landscapes as much as a history of the emergence of an influential community model with the development of modern urban planning and public health policies.

Chapter One: Cultural Materialism-Ecological Marxism Magnet: A Theoretical Framework for Studying Garden City Biopolitics

In the history of the international garden city movement, town planners prescribed an ideal, yet materiality residential life (i.e., physically living in planned garden city community) by first imagining, through cultural ideas and discourses concerning health and nature, how a preconceived, modern built environment could provide the ideal conditions for healthy bodies and healthy living. The historical process through which the early twentieth-century garden city communities were designed and created emerged from the nostalgia-laden visions of the planners, architects, and leaders of the movement, from their incorporation of preceding and interrelated cultural ideas on ideal living, and from the relations between the individuals, the cultural ideas, and the sociocultural milieu of their existence. Yet, in this context of planners seeking to control and regulate the “modern” urban experience and urban subjects through the structuring of a particular built environment form as a new kind of spatial, architectural, and material “order,” their production of space entailed a dialectical, nostalgic imagining of “pre-modern” or “pre-industrial” bodies that in turn helped define how each new garden city would resolve the bodily effects of the adjacent “overcrowded” or “congested” urban environment.⁷¹ The material “order” of each garden city was shaped by an ideational

⁷¹ Barbara Hooper, “Urban Space, Modernity, and Masculinist Desire: The Utopian Longings of Le Corbusier,” in *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*, eds. Amy Bingaman, Lise Sanders, and Rebecca Zorach (New York: Routledge, 2002), 55.

nostalgia of nature and embodied subjectivity that simultaneously drew from an invented past and mobilized the tools of modern (bio)power.

In these imaginings, what a garden city planner or architect visualized as constituting a healthier, more natural and ideal way of living was circumscribed by the social and cultural forms and traditions within the contexts of their enunciation: they were inevitably ideas of living shaped by intersecting and determining issues of class, race, gender, imperialism, and corresponding moral ethos. In the creation of English garden cities such as the first at Letchworth, community planners reinforced an idealization of the traditional English countryside villages as the apotheosis of healthy British living in stark opposition to the condition of the nation's crowded and overdeveloped urban centers. When such garden city ideas were culturally exchanged across the Atlantic and incorporated within American contexts of urban congestion, agrarian destitution, and national unemployment, they became central to wielding the tools of modern town planning for the purposes of planning communities as material and biopolitical spaces. The planning of garden city and greenbelt communities in early twentieth century Britain and the United States represents a history in which the boundaries between the cultural and materials blurred as the planners' mobilized cultural ideas regarding health, nature and ideal embodiment in the service of modern town planning objectives and the biopolitical reformation of the urban environment.

When garden city and greenbelt planners designed communities according to their constructed conceptions of health and naturally healthy environments, the historical processes were at once cultural and material, with the tools of modern town

planning mobilizing the power of cultural ideas within historical and material contexts. As a result, it quickly became apparent that studying historical garden city planning discourse would require a theoretical framework capable of relating cultural ideas, beliefs, customs and traditions concerning the body, nature, built environments and healthy living to processes of material production under capitalism. In this chapter, I explicate the historical-theoretical framework I have employed throughout my dissertation, reflecting, along the way, on the inevitable historiographical issues and political problematics that arise in constructing a historical representation of the garden city past via narrative form. The framework has been shaped by the general principles of what cultural scholar Raymond Williams denoted as “cultural materialism”: “the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production.” Conducting a cultural materialist history of garden city planning affords me an ability to do a nuanced historical analysis within the Marxist tradition of historical materialism that is at the same time a Marxian analysis of culture that subverts preceding economic determinist interpretations of Marx’s base-superstructure metaphor.⁷² As this chapter will discuss, cultural materialism remains highly useful as a method of analyzing cultural ideas within the material processes of historical capitalism.⁷³ By outlining cultural materialism as a historical-theoretical framework, the chapter showcases how the dissertation is both conscious of the forms, theories, and concepts employed for

⁷² Williams, “Marxism, Structuralism and Literary Analysis,” 51-66.

⁷³ By “historical capitalism,” I refer to Immanuel Wallerstein’s conception of a capitalism as a historical and contextual system. This forces the author to approach capitalism in terms of its historical origins and development, rather than as a fixed system with unchanging properties and relations. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

historical study, and designed to reveal how the cultural ideas of garden city planners were part and parcel of the material and contextual processes through which the planned communities emerged.

The use of cultural materialism as my framework for historical analysis immediately raises historiographical issues, as it causes my dissertation to function as what historian Alun Munslow calls a “constructionist” mode of history: a representation of the past that uses social theories to “construct” and interpret historical materials within an explanatory frameworks.⁷⁴ Such issues are compounded by this dissertation’s use of a framework rooted in the Marxist historical materialist tradition to study historical thought that integrated ideas of health, natural spaces, and planned communities through an embodied idealization of healthy living. For how does such a historical framework, informed primarily by the tradition of cultural Marxism, conceptualize and highlight ideas related to nature, health and embodiment without subsuming them under the category of culture, all the while aligning with the postmodern questioning of the historical narrative as an objective representation of past contexts? I respond to this issue by bolstering my cultural materialist framework through recent insight from works in ecological Marxism—which posit nature’s centrality in the material conditions of human existence—and by being purposely self-reflexive and conscious of adjoining the presentist politics of historical writing with the creation of constructionist, cultural materialist history. The fusing of ecological Marxist and cultural materialism insight, I argue, results in the creation of a theoretical lens that views the processes of culture, the realm of ideals,

⁷⁴ See Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24-7.

and understandings of people's constructed relations to natural environments as inseparable from the contextual and material relations of capitalism. Much like Ebenezer Howard's elucidation of his Garden City model as a "Town-Country Magnet," I present my historical-theoretical framework as a kind of "Cultural Materialism-Ecological Marxism Magnet," through which I study the productive power of cultural ideas and the materiality of conceptions of "nature" within one framework. My goal through this chapter is to discuss how I used my cultural materialist-ecological Marxist framework to capture the material consequences of garden city and planning discourses, and their role in the shaping of town and regional planning as modern biopolitical strategies in the service of power.

I Admit it, Alun: this is a Constructionist Historical Representation

If we acknowledge from the outset historian Keith Jenkins' contention that the mode of "history" and the things we call "the past" are interrelated, yet importantly distinct entities—that "History as discourse is thus in a different category to that which it discourses about, that is, the past and history are different things"—it follows to question and critically reflect on the process by which I have come to represent the past through my historical writing within this dissertation. This begins a process of self-awareness requiring me as "author" to acknowledge, first, that conceptually the idea of "History" is a, as Robert J.C. Young and Louis Althusser put it, a "problematical concept" in relation to notions of rationality, intentionality and the totality of social change, and in reproducing the Eurocentric logic of its mode of

operation.⁷⁵ Second, it allows me to accept and consider that what I have written in this dissertation is, using Munslow's words, what I have "discursively created - discoursed... 'the-past-as-history'."⁷⁶ The historian, in other words, "constitutes rather than discovers the meaning of 'the past'." Such a critical reflection on the production of history should then extend to reflecting on the form in which the past is being represented, bringing to light the building implements of the historiography's theoretical framework and how it will be developed and mobilized: the means through which the past has been studied, interpreted and understood prior to its organization within the dissertation's form as a historical representation. This is motivated by previous arguments, made by historians such as Mark Poster, that the historical discipline has been effectively "shattered into countless splinters" of methodologies and objects of study, leading to an "incoherence of historical writing" "caused by the absence of theoretical reflection by the practitioners of social history."⁷⁷ My primary aim in this section is to unpack and productively ruminate as to why exposing the form of my own historical representation is of corresponding importance to my subsequent choice of representing of the past contexts of the international garden city movement through a decidedly and foundationally Marxist framework or analysis, and why an authorial consciousness of the prefigured form of

⁷⁵ Robert J.C. Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 35, 55.

⁷⁶ Keith Jenkins *Re-thinking History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 6-7; Alun Munslow, *A History of History* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 19; Alun Munslow, "History, Skepticism and the Past," *Rethinking History* 4 (2017): 474.

⁷⁷ Poster made this argument in Chapter Three of his book *Foucault, Marxism, and History*. I derive the quotations from an online version of the book, so unfortunately I was unable to ascertain the exact page numbers. See Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism, and History: Mode of Production versus Mode of Information* (New York: Polity Press, 1984).

my historical narrative is not necessarily completely antithetical to a devoutly Marxist historical representation when the contemporary politics of the author is rendered apparent and visible.

For my dissertation, I operate from an understanding of historical writing as a practice through which the historian-author mediates their own present imaginations with the past reality discerned from available and surviving primary source evidence; their history is a means through which the researcher translates consulted remnants of the past into an understandable account of past reality. In overall perspective, this mean I am philosophically aligned with some of the central tenets of the “deconstructionist” approach to historical writing, in which the form of writing and conveyance is an essential component in the historian’s ability to create meaning from their interpretation of the past. It is this gap between the past and its historical representation that suggests the necessity for the historian to be conscious of the ways they have constructed historical meaning through how they examined surviving documents and fragments of the past and organized these fragments into a coherent historical account.⁷⁸ Unlike previous methodologically qualitative Physical Cultural Studies dissertations, in which the presence of the researchers’ own bodies within fields of sociological or ethnographic observation affords them an opportunity to critically reflect on how their embodied subjectivity was embedded within their field of research, the historian’s relation to the representation of past reality and the

⁷⁸ See Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 61-81.

creation of a historical narrative is perhaps the predominant performance of embodied research subjectivity requiring critical reflection.⁷⁹

Arguably the predominant mode of literary representation within the professional historical discipline remains the narrative, what Munslow defines as a “structure of explanation used to account for the occurrence of events and human actions.” I’m approaching “narrative” terminologically in a broad sense, and follow Munslow’s approach: at root, a “semantic innovation” (to insert French philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s useful phrase) in which the historian conveys their “written report”, based on their study of surviving documentation concerning a past reality, all within a foundationally literary form organized by the historian-author. In this perspective, the narrative is essential as the form through which a historians presents an explanation of a past topic. By defining and introducing the narrative in this manner, I seek to display mine own and touch upon the general historiographical process of meaning creation. Such a conscious acknowledgment of the form of the dissertation allows me to scrutinize, rather than unconsciously assume, some of the reasons why I, like everyday people, am treating historical time as largely rectilinear and not circular.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ For examples of self-reflexivity by qualitative researchers and former graduate students of PCS, see Andrew Grainger, “Fear and (Self-)Loathing in Academia,” *Cultural Studies<>Critical Methodologies* 6 (2011): 558-564; Bryan C. Clift, “Suspect of Smiles: Struggle, Compassion, and Running to Reclaim the Body in Urban Baltimore,” *Cultural Studies<>Critical Methodologies* 5 (2014): 496-505. For a source on reflections on the embodied subjectivity of qualitative researchers, see Yvonna S. Lincoln, Susan A. Lynham, and Egon G. Guba, “Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011), 97-128.

⁸⁰ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 1, 3-4, 201; Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), ix.

There is a large, illuminating literature addressing theories of the narrative form, the dialectic between language and practice, and the politicized, ideological and homological relations between its form and the representation of past reality. I do not attempt to synthesize various historians' arguments and debates on the subject here. To date, there remains much contentious discussion within the historical profession regarding the narrative form and the meaning of its use in the conveyance of the past.⁸¹ Historians such as David Carr have countered Alun Munslow's described disconnect between the narrative form and the accurate conveyance of past reality, offering that there is a continuity between the narrative form and human experience found in factors as the development of communities—in which they articulate the plural subject “we” (as opposed to “I”). For the purposes of historiographical transparency and understanding the relation between theory and the representation of past realities, however, it remains useful to acknowledge that such representations through historical writing involves the use of some literary form to convey meaning through the historical account.⁸²

⁸¹ The practice of “writing” history, and the problems that arise from such practice, have been explored in detail by scholars such as Michel De Certeau. See Michel De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, ed. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). For an introduction into discussions of the narrative form in historical practice, see Geoffrey Roberts, ed., *The History and Narrative Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); David Harlan, *The Degradation of American History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005). For an example of some of the previous responses to the arguments of White and others, see C. Behan McCullagh, “The Truth of Historical Narratives,” *History and Theory* 26, no. 4(1987): 30-46. French historian Roger Chartier importantly revisits and critiques the arguments of Hayden White and others in terms of their conception of language and practice. See Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); William H. Sewell, Jr., “Language and Practice in Cultural History: Backing Away from the Edge of the Cliff,” *French Historical Studies* 2 (1998): 241-254.

⁸²David Carr, “Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity,” *History and Theory* 25, no. 2(1986): 117-131; Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), ix; Hayden White, “The Value of

The dissertation approaches the question of the historical narrative in this way so as to acknowledge and render transparent the ways in which the history has been “prefigured” through its form. By prefiguration, I refer to how the historians chooses to conceptualize a historical domain before deploying certain theoretical tools in order to explain the knowledge’s meaning. My present historical domain is the international garden city movement and the chosen years of contexts I have sought to study. Hayden White argues that such historiographical prefiguring is a poetic act in that the form of prefiguring, if the past is being represented through a narrative, can be characterized by a literary mode. White identified four modes of prefiguring in his study of nineteenth-century European historical consciousness—metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony—but argued that such prefiguring can take any number of forms based on the historian’s act. But the point is that such prefigurative strategies, on the part of historians, exposes the nature of historical writing and how modes of historical consciousness involve linguistic strategies to organize the empirical field in order to explain its contents through specific theories.⁸³

Such arguments on the representational nature of the historical narrative are revisited here in order to help explain the significance of revealing from the outset the chosen positionality of the dissertation’s mode of representation and framework for imagining and conceptualizing the garden city past. By calling my dissertation a “representation” of the garden city planning past, I do not assume or take for granted the correspondence between my form of linguistic expression (the narrative) and the

Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1-4.

⁸³ White, *Metahistory*, x, 1-7.

“explanatory, ideological and political” reasons involved in my method of historical interpretation. Following F.R. Ankersmit, by using the vocabulary of historical representation, I can “account not only for the details of the past but also for the way these details have been integrated within the totality of the historical narrative.”⁸⁴ Second, it forces me, as the author, to recognize the practice and writing of a historical narrative as a “cultural practice”: a distinctly relativist, contextual activity functioning as a discourse about the past and constructed through the language of a human author who is inevitably contoured by their own cultural and ideological station. Second, it cause the historian to see language as ideological infected, and history as “statements of power” involved the transference of socially construction signification as an objective representation of the past. This allows me to present my theories, methods, and approaches as politically transparent, deliberately chosen, and linked to my own personal and political contexts. My act of creating historical meaning through language becomes a contextualized performance because I am transforming a set of real events into a particular form.⁸⁵

The Political Intentions of a Constructionist Historical Narrative

The particular politics of my particular constructionist history, and the relationship between my own present position as the subjective author and my chosen form and prefiguring of the historical narrative, are issues that I acknowledge and

⁸⁴ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 149; F.R. Ankersmit, “Historical Representation,” *History and Theory* 3 (1988): 209-210.

⁸⁵ Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3-20; Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 14-5; Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 131-2.

wish not to submerge within my present practice. After all, as those at the CCCS explained, historians have entered a period “when the political credentials of historical practice are more openly recognized.”⁸⁶ By relating my authorial positionality and politics to my historical practice, I do not presume the separation between the historical meaning of my dissertation and my own positionality as the author and arbiter of the history, thereby helping to prevent my dissertation from reproducing the Western Enlightenment-inspired dualism between subject and object and the Kantian understanding that objective reality exists independent of the knowing subject of the historian.⁸⁷ Introducing this discussion of historical writing as a cultural practice and discourse about the past is not meant to deviate the reader’s attention from the historical topic of garden cities but to expose my choice of pursuing a decidedly cultural materialist history of garden cities and link it to my personal alignment with the politics of Raymond Williams’ theories and approach to studying history and culture. After all, as the history scholars at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) rightfully asserted, “History and politics are fundamentally connected.”⁸⁸ This transparency of method, thus, exposes my authorial process of historical creation, moving it beyond assuming a necessary correspondence between the form of historical writing and its direct transmittance of past reality, and towards a comprehensive unpacking of the politicized concepts, theories and frameworks in my historical explanation of the garden city past. The

⁸⁶ Richard Johnson, Gregor McLennan, Bill Schwarz and David Sutton, eds., *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7.

⁸⁷ Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose,” in *Kant’s Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 41-53; Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” *Cultural Studies* 2-3 (2007): 172-174.

⁸⁸ Johnson et al, *Making Histories*, 7.

historical-theoretical framework becomes intertwined with the historical analysis itself and becomes a whole political project designed to study the corporeal politics of a built environment form that remains highly relevant and salient within contemporary political and cultural discourse.⁸⁹

While historical writing can, therefore, be seen as a politically and ideologically contaminated cultural practice—exemplified through the work of White, Munslow, Joan Scott and other historians of the “linguistic turn”—the liberation of the historian from “that noble dream” of historical objectivity energizes rather than restricts the motivations of a decidedly Marxist historical dissertation.⁹⁰ This is due to the opportunity, afforded by the deconstruction of the writing of history as an ideologically-neutral act, to consciously acknowledge and bring to the surface the political heritages and dimensions of my chosen theories, concepts, and framework. The question of my historical-theoretical framework and concepts become as much about my chosen form of historical writing and interpretation as their compatibility with the historical topic and contexts. The historian becomes avowedly political in that, to use the words of the late Howard Zinn, they “begin to turn their intellectual energies to the urgent problems of our time” without burying

⁸⁹ By “self-reflexivity,” I refer to scholar Joshua Newman’s work reflecting on his “qualitatively structured research act and, in so doing, problematize the politics of embodiment and subjectivity therein.” See Joshua I. Newman, “[Un]Comfortable in My Own Skin: Articulation, Reflexivity, and the Duality of Self,” *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies* 11(2011): 545-557. In the last sentence, I am referring to the continued referencing of garden city history within discussions by urban planning professionals and others as to the potential in creating ecologically sustainable cities in an emerging context of climate change. See Jennifer S. Light, *The Nature of Cities: Ecological Visions and the American Urban Professions, 1920-1960* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

⁹⁰ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1991): 773-797.

such impulses under the guise of notions of historical objectivity.⁹¹ The act of historical writing becomes enmeshed in the political implications of its incorporation historical and social theories, and strives to serve as a “political intervention”, following an approach articulated by, for example, Raymond Williams and those of the British New Left in their *May Day Manifesto* of 1968.⁹² It is important to remember that Munslow’s exposition of the predominant approaches employed by historians was part of his overall inquiry into whether historical practice can be an objective and neutral endeavor of studying the past, reinforcing Hayden White’s previous arguments on the prefigurative and socially constructed nature of historical inquiry. Hayden White himself, in *Metahistory*, consciously cast his book in the ironic prefigurative mode, thereby buttressing his own arguments by including his own present writing into his critique of how histories cast themselves in literary modes. In recognizing my historical writing as a performative cultural practice, I expose my chosen framework to its own particular context, politics, and relevant relations of power, and make it an integral component of the totality of my historical analysis.⁹³

My compulsion to write a historical narrative arises as part of my study of the garden city past because of the apparentness, within previous garden city historiography, of what English literature scholar Frank Kermode called “essence of our explanatory fictions”: the “making sense” of the world through seeing historical

⁹¹ See Howard Zinn, *The Politics of History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

⁹² See Raymond Williams, ed., *May Day Manifesto 1968* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

⁹³ White, *Metahistory*, xii; see Joan W. Scott, “History in Crisis? The Others’ Side of the Story,” *American Historical Review* 94, no. 3(1989): 680-92; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “History and Post-Modernism,” *Past and Present*, no. 135(1992): 194-208; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, ed. *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

time as rectilinear and the existence of a beginning, middle, and end within human experience. Reading their works, most garden city historians locate the beginning (or “rise”, or “emergence”) of garden city history more or less in the writings and ideas of the Sir Ebenezer Howard and his 1898 publication *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. From Howard’s articulation of what was to constitute a garden city, the narrative generally follows the construction of garden city communities in Britain, the transferring of ideas to the United States and internationally, and the influence of garden ideals until their relative decline with the arrival of Post-World War II “new towns” and suburbanization. This represents a general narrative structure of the twentieth-century “life” of the garden city movement.⁹⁴ I do not necessarily bring this up to question the significance of Howard and his book in catalyzing the promotion and creation of garden city communities and ideals. Rather, I seek to use the garden city narrative structure to my advantage by accepting the historical incompleteness of my dissertation, focusing on specific historical questions of embodiment, nature, and cultural materiality rather than attempt to reconstruct the totality of the garden city past. Consciously using the narrative structure already in place in garden city historiography allows the flexibility to examine specific questions through a theorized historical framework.

The question then becomes: what theories can (or should?) be employed to make sense of the historical concepts, contexts, and processes of the garden city past?

⁹⁴ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35-6; All of the works to which I refer here will be cited and discussed in subsequent chapters. For a few examples from the literature, see Stanley Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, vii; Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz, eds., *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning: Transnationality and Urban Ideas in Africa and Palestine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014);

Though it may at first glance seem contrary to the conventional historical method to elucidate a theoretical approach as a precursor to studying the reality of past experience, we should remember the fruitfulness in studying the complex relations between the use of theory and the study of history. Even as he embarked on a vigorous defense of historical inquiry through such works as *The Poverty of Theory*, E.P. Thompson argued that theory is not separate from historical practice and methodology, “as if you can keep the theory inside a locked drawer in the desk.”⁹⁵ For Thompson, his understanding of historical materialist inquiry required the historian to give persistent attention to their “lines of theoretical supply,” particularly to defend contextual contingency and agency against idealist attacks on historical empiricism. The knowledge obtained through historical materialism, Thompson argued, is always a “developing knowledge...a provisional and approximate knowledge with many silences and impurities” that arises from the “dialogue” between theory and historical practice.⁹⁶ Such theories and frameworks for historical study are not intended to fit historical knowledge into a preconceived model. To the contrary, for Thompson the theoretical tools of historical materialism were to enhance the study of historical agency, and historical concepts “display extreme elasticity and allow for great irregularity” in how they generate knowledge from evidence from past contexts.⁹⁷ Discussing the theoretical framework in its relation to the historical practice thereby serves to illuminate the complexity and contradictory nature of historical concepts and, as a result, the complexity of past social experience.

⁹⁵ Joel Pfister, *Critique for What? Cultural Studies, American Studies, Left Studies* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 89-90.

⁹⁶ Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, 2, 62, 68.

⁹⁷ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 25.

So, Why Choose Cultural Materialism?

As I began to read the historiography of garden cities and the reformist intentions of the movement, the narratives kept reminding me of Marxist scholar Marshall Berman's *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*. Every time I read and re-read Sir Ebenezer Howard's *To-morrow*, I couldn't help but relate Howard's ideas, and his seeming desire to merge the conditions and amenities of town and country within one reformed, modern built environment as an attempt to solve the crises of urban overcrowding and rural degradation, with Berman's explication of "modern concerns" as the simultaneous "will to change—to transform themselves and their world—and a terror of disorientation and disintegration, of life falling apart." To experience modernity, Berman wrote, "is to live a life of paradox and contradiction": to be overpowered by institutions and processes that target the localized, community values of "moral economies" and "moral ecologies," and yet to be willed to exact social change in the face of those forces of production through values derived from tradition and visions of the past.⁹⁸ As I will try to argue in this dissertation, the prescribed garden city community form was, at root, a modern reformist attempt to achieve spatial and cultural synthesis through the utilization of town planning as an instrument of modern biopower. It was, in this sense, a history of reformist planners

⁹⁸ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Verso, 1983), 13-14.

and social thinkers seeking to transcend the seeming contradictions of modern industrial capitalism by reforming where and how people lived and worked. And yet, despite the thoroughly “modernness” of the international garden city movement’s objectives and the intentions of the associated planners and social thinkers—seeking the creation of communities that showcased a clear “improvement” on older communities in terms of their planning and inclusion of recent sanitary technologies and scientific methods—I continued to see the community plans and planners’ writings as entailing a striking antimodern and nostalgic undercurrent, in terms of the sources of their definition of health, nature, and their idealizations of certain forms of livelihood.⁹⁹

Without trying to ignore the contextual specificities of their approaches, terms and underlying philosophies, the predominantly Euro-American, middle and upper class men who supported the garden city movement of the early twentieth century longed to restore traditional social relations they believed once existed in past living arrangements before the industrial capitalist mode of production, and its onslaught on housing, cities and natural environment, through the power and tools of modern planning. In their quest to establish conditions that would create a healthier, happier national citizenry, they invented and utilized versions of past agricultural, colonial and medieval life—and these living motifs’ seeming natural healthfulness in terms of architecture, social and environmental arrangements, and physical cultural practices—as the cultural and ideological arrangements through which modern town

⁹⁹ Raymond Williams wrote in *Keywords* that, by the twentieth century, the word “modern” became strongly associated with a sense “improved or satisfactory or efficient.” See Williams, *Keywords*, 208-209.

planning tools could restoration to a material reality. Though scholars of modernity such as Jeffrey Alexander have illuminated the backward-looking character of many modern movements—the prevalence of romanticism and naturalism, and the neo-medievalism that Umberto Eco called the “return of the Middle Ages,” for example—in the history of garden cities, the planners’ nostalgia for the past was, in general, a constitutive element of modern community models and prescribed forms.¹⁰⁰ It wasn’t just that the garden city movement represented a modern example of town planning inspired by mythical visions of naturally healthy, pre-industrial past living and social arrangements. The contradictions between their romantic, antimodern nostalgia and their modern, “scientific” town planning methods were synthesized through their community forms and power positions as planners and architects. Only by reinvigorating their nostalgic visions of natural health and pre-industrial life through the modern power strategy of spatial planning did they believe they could create the conditions for the development of healthy, more efficient, White worker bodies and resolve the deleterious effects of industrial capitalism upon urban health.

By focusing on the *planning* of garden cities in Britain and the United States—the cultural and ideological politics of the intentions, designs, and layouts of planners influenced by the international garden city movement—I am writing a history of cultural ideas concerning health, nature, physical culture and ideal built environments that were not necessarily in direct conflict, and were ultimately

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Dark Side of Modernity* (Malden: Polity Press, 2013); Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1986), 59-86.

absorbed into the “cultural hegemony” of capitalist social relations.¹⁰¹ In my fundamentally Marxian approach to history, I recognize conflict, as E.P. Thompson put it, as “the dialectic of a changing social process”: class conflict and struggle as the “motor” of history and historical change.¹⁰² The particular history of garden cities, however, represents contexts in which Anglo-American planners sought the reconstitution of lower class bodies and livelihoods through the reshaping of built environments *within*, rather than as an alternative to the relations of production. The history of the garden city movement is one in which idealized forms were made material and practical through the uses of capital and bourgeois support. They incorporated socialist ideas in their construction of healthier, improved living environments, but these were ideas functioning as, to use Stanley Aronowitz’s words, “a means by which workers obtain a redress of grievances within capitalist society, rather than an instrument for its transformation.” Garden city ideas were, following Herbert Marcuse, the discussion and promotion of alternative policies *within* the status quo.”¹⁰³ For this reason, in beginning to study this garden city history I realized that my dissertation would require a theoretical framework capable of tracing and untangling the complicated cultural ideas of the movement’s cultural ideas and their complex relation with the “cultural hegemony” of the industrial capitalist mode.

¹⁰¹ T.J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities,” *The American Historical Review* 10, no. 3(1985): 567-593. See also Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (New York: Verso, 2001). For an exploration of “cultural hegemony” in history, see Lee Arts and Bren Ortega Murphy, *Cultural Hegemony in the United States* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2000).

¹⁰² Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, 289; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Samuel H. Beer (Arlington Heights: AHM Pub. Corp., 1955).

¹⁰³ Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 51; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 2.

In her recent study on the emergence of identity as a cultural “keyword” with material consequences in Western capitalist societies, cultural scholar Marie Moran reinvigorated and argued for the contemporary salience of Raymond Williams’ cultural materialism for studying the material force of cultural ideas and formations. Following Raymond Williams’ originating explication, Moran described cultural materialism as theoretical framework for studying “how ideas, language and signification...exist as forms of practical consciousness themselves, and in virtue of this, have causal powers.” Much of Moran’s use of cultural materialism for her study of identity formation and capitalism derives from a re-reading of Williams’ classic texts, including *Culture and Society*, *The Long Revolution*, *Marxism and Literature* and *Keywords*, as well as his essays on Marxist cultural analysis as a member of the British New Left. As she draws from Williams’ texts and theories to help her understand identity as a material force in capitalist life, Moran asserts that cultural materialism remains a salient and important theoretical framework for Marxist cultural analysis because it offers a way of resolving Marxism’s “problem of ideology,” as Stuart Hall put it, by insisting that the material world entails a “cultural character”: that culture, as Williams himself put it, is “built into our living.” The framework remains firmly rooted in the cultural Marxist understandings of “practical consciousness” as wrapped up in the relations of ordinary human and social activity, yet expands and develops Williams’ originating proposition that ideas and

consciousness are as apart of the “human material social process...as material products themselves...”¹⁰⁴

I was attracted to Moran’s explication of cultural materialism because she presents it as an approach for conceptualizing cultural ideas present within historical processes and products of the material forces of production, but also more importantly as determining elements within contextual processes of social production and social change. Rather than articulate cultural materialism as a form of cultural analysis attendant to contemporary concerns, Moran’s book reaffirmed Williams’ assertion that “any adequate sociology of culture must...be an historical sociology.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, rather than reject the historical materialist premise that material forces constitute the engine of history, Moran’s articulation of cultural materialism allows the reconsideration of what constitutes a “material force,” and include “language, ideas, values, beliefs, discourses, and so on” as integral components within contextual processes of material production. As part of her theoretical and conceptual indebtedness to Raymond Williams as the eponymous articulator of cultural materialism, Moran relies heavily on Williams’ understandings of historical “keywords” in order to articulate identity as a form of signification that is inherently, historical, contextual, and shaped in constant relation to processes of capitalism and cultural change. Saying that it has been “relatively neglected” as an approach to analyzing culture since Williams’ own formal articulation in 1977 in *Marxism and*

¹⁰⁴ Marie Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 59-65; Williams, *Culture and Society*; Williams, *The Long Revolution*; Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 59-60; Williams, *Keywords*; Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” 3-16; Hall, “The Problem of Ideology,” 28-44.

¹⁰⁵ Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 33.

Literature, Moran re-presents cultural materialism as an illuminative means for scholars to examine “how the cultural and ideational operate in a capitalist system; how people are socialized into a capitalist way of life; and how ideas can support the reproduction of capitalism, or, alternatively, offer forms of resistance to it.” The framework, within its ability to capture historical and contextual complexity, allows me to study a topic in which cultural ideas of health, nature, and ideal embodiment had a practical impact on the material production of preconceived built environments.¹⁰⁶

Moran’s work is one of the latest in an array of scholarship seeking to elucidate and outline cultural materialism as a paradigmatic approach for studying the productive power of ideas in cultures.¹⁰⁷ As scholar Hywel Dix explains, even with a proliferation of scholarship on Williams’ cultural materialism, particularly within English and literary studies, there remains a lack of consensus over what exactly the approach entails. Multiple literary studies works, for example, identify cultural materialism as more of a psychoanalytical approach to the study of literature following that of Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, even though, as Dix says,

¹⁰⁶ Marie Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 7-9, 31-34, 61-2; Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, 15-16, 21-22.

¹⁰⁷ In addition to Moran’s book, see also Jim McGuigan, *Neoliberal Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Christopher Prendergast, ed. *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Scott Wilson, *Cultural Materialism: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995); H. Gustav Klaus, “Cultural Materialism: A Summary of Principles,” in W. John Morgan and Peter Preston, eds. *Raymond Williams: Politics, Education, Letters* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 88-104; Milner, *Cultural Materialism*; Chris Barker, “Cultural materialism,” in *The SAGE dictionary of cultural studies*, ed. Chris Barker (London: SAGE, 2004), retrieved from http://proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/sageukcult/cultural_materialism/0?institutionId=1210. For a more general history of Raymond Williams as cultural scholar, see Dennis L. Dworkin and Leslie G. Roman, eds., *Views Beyond the Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1993). For a good critique of Williams’ cultural materialism as a theory of history, see R.S. Neale, “Cultural Materialism: A Critique,” *Social History* 2 (1984): 199-215.

“Williams did not write about Freud, or Lacan, very much at all.” Part of this issue of ambiguity stems from the interdisciplinarity of Williams’ work: through literary scholars often approach Williams based on his engagement and challenges to the English and Literary studies fields, the significance of his scholarly engagement extended beyond the English discipline. As one of the most prominent thinkers of the British New Left, Williams’ critique of English studies was inseparable from his questioning of Marxist orthodoxy on the determinative nature of the capitalist mode of production, and commitment to socialist politics within Britain. If scholars have had difficulty in cementing a dogmatic principles for cultural materialism, this is undoubtedly linked to the importance of Williams’ work beyond the discipline of English and his commitment to the vibrancy of ordinary culture as much more than the product of the material determinism of the contextual capitalist mode.¹⁰⁸

I approach cultural materialism in my dissertation as both a Marxist theory of cultural production and cultural analysis, and as a critique of Marxist explications of historical materialism. As historian R.S. Neale explained,

Williams's difficulty with Marx is that which faces all marxists. It is the nature and structure of 'the mode of production' and the determinate role claimed for it in relation to law, politics, the state and, most importantly for Williams, 'culture'; the question, that is, how best to understand and express the relationships implied in Marx's proposition, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Hywel Rowland Dix, *After Raymond Williams: Cultural Materialism and the Break-Up of Britain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 25-7; John Higgins, *Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Neale, “Cultural Materialism,” 200. Neale borrows Marx’s quote from his manuscripts on economics and philosophy. See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).

While Moran argues for cultural materialism's contemporary relevancy for studying the material relations of cultural ideas in capitalist societies, her explication centered on the ways Williams provides an alternative to both the idealism of literary analysis and the explicit material determinism of social change exhibited in Marxist cultural theories at the time. In doing so, Moran leaves relatively unexamined just how Williams' cultural materialism relates with other Marxist critiques of economic determinist translations of historical materialism. Seeing cultural materialism this way allows me to explicate the paradigm in relation to other prominent, still influential texts in Marxist historiography. This does not mean, however, that I understand cultural materialism as a dated theory of culture in relation to postmodern theories by stressing the historical and material nature of cultural production and studying ideas in terms of their relation to the "real conditions" of social change. As theorist Terry Eagleton argues, cultural materialism functions as a theoretical "bridge" between Marxism and postmodernism: it "radically revises" formulations relegating culture as a superstructural category of lesser material and determining importance to the economic, but also preserves a historical sensibility Eagleton finds lacking in the "modish, uncritical, unhistorical aspects" of some postmodern theories. Steering clear of unhistorical abstractions yet maintaining a theoretically-nuanced, material and historical orientation, cultural materialism offers a potential resolution to Stuart Hall's "problem of ideology" by providing a way to study culture as a productive, causal force.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 198-9; Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 63; Hall, "The Problem of Ideology," 28-44.

Cultural Materialism as a Historical-Theoretical Framework

In my employment of Williams' cultural materialism as the primary framework for my dissertation's historical analysis, I follow scholars Marie Moran's and Hywel Dix's understanding of Williams' originating explication emerging from his 1977 *Marxism and Literature*: a theory of all forms cultural signification within the processes of material production, deriving from a Marxist tradition of historical materialist analysis. This is in order to mobilize cultural materialism as a framework for historical analysis, rather than its perhaps predominant utilization in English and literary analyses in tandem with the literature theories of New Historicism. Since Moran and Dix accept and employ cultural materialism from the political and theoretical standpoint Williams originally elucidated—cultural materialism as “a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism”—they re-interpret and re-explicate the approach to culture in terms of its relation to Marxist analysis rather than its disciplinary import within English and literary studies. Following these scholars allows me to engage with cultural materialism via scholarly discourses and critiques of historical materialism rather than studies of literature, for, as Andrew Milner asserts, the cultural materialist analyses within literature circles are of “a rather different cultural materialism” than that of Williams' theory of Marxist cultural and historical analysis.¹¹¹ Second, Moran

¹¹¹ Milner, *Re-imagining Cultural Studies*, 18. There are numerous discussions of cultural materialism as a theory of literary culture, often in relation to theories of “New Historicism.” See, as examples, John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Kiernan Ryan, ed., *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader* (New York: St. Martin's

follows Williams in using cultural materialism to study the “social creation” and materiality of signification, causing both to see cultural signs, including ideas, as in Williams’ terms, “a specific form of practical consciousness,” a “practical material activity...literally, a means of production.” This means the ideational—the realm of cultural ideas—can be studied historically, contextually, and in relation to “all other social and material activity”: the articulation of ideas within cultural contexts can be captured in their relation to the processes of material production. Moran and Dix’s works allow me to use cultural materialism as a historical and Marxian-derived framework of history, rather than a framework for literary studies.¹¹²

The seeds of what Raymond Williams ultimately developed and termed cultural materialism germinated in his earlier, arguably more recognizable texts on culture as embroiled in the everyday, “ordinary” experience of historical change. In this I specifically refer to his laudable texts *Culture and Society* in 1958 and *The Long Revolution* in 1961.¹¹³ These two books are now considered foundational works in the formation of cultural studies in the British tradition. In *Culture and Society* Williams’ concern was to historicize the idea of culture within the substantive social changes of eighteenth and nineteenth-century British society. He suggested “a new general theory of culture” that countered elitist, idealist conceptions of literary culture

Press, 1996); Neema Parvini, *Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

¹¹² Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 5, 38; Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 59-63; Dix, *After Raymond Williams*; Andrew Milner, *Re-Imagining Cultural Studies: The Promise of Cultural Materialism* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2002), 18-22.

¹¹³ Along with Richard Hoggart’s 1957 book of cultural analysis *The Uses of Literacy*, Williams’ *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution* profoundly shape the version of British Cultural Studies and approach to culture that undergird the pedagogy of Physical Cultural Studies at the University of Maryland. PCS scholars Michael Silk and David Andrews acknowledged this in 2011 when they wrote, “[T]he PCS project is significantly informed by the “Hallian” version of cultural studies...” See Silk and Andrews, “Toward a Physical Cultural Studies,” 9.

from the likes of F.R. Leavis, who sought to protect the meaning of high culture from the corruption of the “masses”. Williams’ theory, in contrast, wanted to account for the historical complexity and contextuality of “culture” as it related to changes in the conditions of everyday British life. Williams’ theory of culture was “a theory of relations between elements in a whole way of life,” a reformulation that departed from idealist definitions in traditional British literary analysis, and towards emphasizing that culture was “ordinary,” and irrevocably a component of the material and historical changes (particularly the effects of the Industrial Revolution) of British society. In *The Long Revolution*, Williams extended his historical analysis of culture into illustrating how major social changes within British life—the advance of the Industrial Revolution, struggles for democratic institutions, and the wholesale expansion of communications—were not “separate processes” but significant, interrelated and “revolutions” with people’s experience of everyday life. In both works, Williams’ intention was to inject a historical sensibility into English literary studies, conceptualizing the realm of culture and ideas as not isolated from the other aspects of social and material life, but inseparable and integrative within all of the historical processes and relations of the society in which they were expressed.¹¹⁴

Though Williams devoted a chapter in *Culture and Society* to how Marxist literary analyses dealt with the meaning of culture in terms of its relation to the determining forces in history, his discussion was not intended to help explicate a new framework of cultural analysis within the Marxist tradition. His concern lay more in

¹¹⁴ Williams, *Culture and Society*, vi; Williams, *The Long Revolution*; Dix, *After Raymond Williams*, 27-33.

how different British authors—including William Morris and Christopher Caudwell, two prominent British Marxist thinkers—attempted to outline a general Marxist theory of culture and how it related more generally to treatments of culture within literary studies. But as a result, Williams dealt with the complicated question of whether, borrowing Marx’s use of the term in the preface of his *Critique of Political Economy*, the economic “structure” of society determines the “forms of social consciousness,” including the ideas within a given culture. What Williams argues in the chapter is that there is a tension within such writings between idealist conceptions of the importance of cultural works abstracted from historical processes, and a Marxian emphasis on how material existence determines people’s ideas and overall social consciousness. British Marxist historian E.P. Thompson, in a review of *The Long Revolution* for the *New Left Review*, argued that Williams moved out of the “main line of the socialist intellectual tradition” by dealing with historical change in terms of its relation within a social totality—“a whole way of life”—rather than as a question of struggle and conflict between bourgeois and proletariat modes of consciousness. This desire to seek a more nuanced understanding of culture as more than a superstructural mode determined by the material laid conceptual groundwork for Williams’ later formulation of culture and cultural ideas as holding potential material power within contexts of social production and social change.¹¹⁵

Thompson’s review of *The Long Revolution* criticized Williams’ conception of cultural practices as within a totality of material and social change rather, arguing

¹¹⁵ Williams, *Culture and Society*, 283-303; Karl Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,” *Marxists.org*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/>; E.P. Thompson, “The Long Revolution, Part II,” *New Left Review* I/10(1961): 34.

that it subsumed instances of class conflict under an all-encompassing historical narrative of gradual progress. Yet, Thompson's review did not necessarily critique the weight of Williams' work as a nuanced theory of culture, so much as reveal a polarizing, though productive fissure between British New Left scholars concerning the determining nature of class in society and the salience of structural Marxist elucidations of ideology.¹¹⁶ As Stuart Hall argued, historical agency and consciousness was an integral component in Williams' "culturalist" approach to history, for he conceptualized culture as "ordinary" and entailing the whole of social processes and the (re)formation of common meanings in the social relations of everyday life. While he inferred the importance of historical experience and working class consciousness, Williams' understanding came by way of broadly studying transformations in ordinary British society.¹¹⁷ Thompson, a scholar profoundly informed by a sense of social and political crisis, reviewed *The Long Revolution* as part of an airing of political and theoretical debate within the New Left of Britain rather than a wholesale repudiation of Williams' theoretical work. As historian Dennis Dworkin explains, while Thompson saw the work of the British New Left as a political movement aiming to transform the country's Labour Party, "Williams would have been satisfied with the more modest achievement of a new socialist understanding of contemporary Britain." Entailing a more intellectual and literary historical approach, Williams' *The Long Revolution* seemed to a Marxian

¹¹⁶ See Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1980); Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*. By structural Marxist interpretations, I refer to Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

¹¹⁷ Thompson, "The Long Revolution, Part II," 34; Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 12-13; Hall, "Cultural Studies," 58-60.

historian like Thompson to be a work that, while influenced by the writings of Marx, did not emphasize enough the role of the relations of humans and class conflict within social change. Thompson did not necessarily debunk Williams' approach to culture or his account for historical processes and contradictions, but rather suggested that Williams' would inevitably find instances of class conflict if he devoted closer attention to the particulars of cultural agency within specific historical contexts.¹¹⁸

By the time Williams began the task of directly elucidating cultural materialism as a theoretical approach, the critiquing of the Marxist base-superstructure "metaphor" of material determinism became central to his developing theory of culture.¹¹⁹ In an article in the *New Left Review* in 1973, Williams argued how the primacy of "a determining base and a determined superstructure" within Marxist theories of culture demanded its attention. But rather than focusing on the superstructure, Williams attended to conceptions of the material base, and how Marxist theories of culture often considered the base in "uniform and usually static way." They assumed and reiterated that the base constitutes the relations and mode of production at particular stages in history. This, Williams argued, neglects Marx's understanding of the "deep contradictions" and variations within the historical and social relations of production. The base, Williams asserts, is not static but rather an active, historically-specific process of the development of social and material existence. The superstructure, then, involves cultural "practices" rather than ideal

¹¹⁸ Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain*, 101-4.

¹¹⁹ By speaking of Marx and Engel's "base and superstructure" as a "metaphor", I refer to E.P. Thompson's discussion of the topic in relation to its abuse within Stalinist formulations: "no such basis and superstructure ever existed; it is a metaphor to help us to understand what does exist—men, who act, experience, think and act again." See Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 133.

“objects”, a key terminological difference to accentuate culture as formations within historical processes and context.¹²⁰ This pushed Williams on a theoretical path towards considering ideology as more than an abstract-able and formal system of values and meanings, but values, beliefs, and cultural meaning as integral to the complicated “whole social process” of uneven, “specific distributions of power and influence.”¹²¹

As he began to develop cultural materialism as a framework for tracing the interwoven elements and legacies within the “whole social process” of culture, Williams argued that forms, values and practices became active components in the maintenance and determining of power relationships in society. To articulate this Williams worked in Antonio Gramsci’s explication of “hegemony” within his own developing framework.¹²² Like postcolonial scholar Edward Said, Raymond Williams found Gramsci’s distinction between political (state institutions such as the army, police, bureaucratic governance) and civil society (voluntary associations such as trade unions, schools, families) analytically useful because it allowed him to approach culture as a whole historical process composed of complex, interlocking “forces”—political, economic, and cultural—and link ordinary forms of culture to questions of capitalist ideology, class domination, and social reproduction. Following

¹²⁰ Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” 3-16.

¹²¹ Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 108.

¹²² Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 245-246. For a foundational study of Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony” in English, see Gwyn A. Williams, “The Concept of ‘Egemonia’ in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4 (1960): 586-599; Christopher Hill, “Antonio Gramsci,” *The New Reasoner* 4 (1958): 107-113. For studies on the relation between Gramsci’s “hegemony” and language/signification, see Peter Ives, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2004); Alessandro Carlucci, *Gramsci and Languages: Unification, Diversity, Hegemony* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Gramsci, Williams came to define hegemony as “the active social and cultural forces” which induce the social process into becoming “organized by specific and dominant meanings and values”: a way of studying, following Said, how “certain cultural forms predominate over others” and reproduce dominant capitalist ideology and relations.¹²³ The point was to study the relation between domination and subordination: how working class culture came to imbue or absorb cultural elements of the capitalist mode. In terms of his impact on Williams, Gramsci, along with other cultural theorists such as Walter Benjamin, linked issues of working class agency with the complex power dynamics involved in cultural production, and questioned how class agency could be expressed through cultural forms, ideas and values inextricably tied to the coercion of the mode of production’s logic.¹²⁴ This led Raymond Williams to explore hegemony in his *Marxism and Literature* without a dogmatic definition, for he was trying to move away from studying “ideology” as a formal system, and study “cultural activity” as embedded within the complicated social process of consciousness itself: culture not as the expression of hegemony, but constitutive of a complex historical process. As a result, Williams translated hegemony as part of his ongoing effort to study culture as “a whole social process” related to the organization of power, and ideology as not simply the consciousness of a system of meaning, ideas and practices but embedded in “the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meanings and values.” His interpretation of

¹²³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 6-7; Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 110-111.

¹²⁴ Isadora Anderson Helfgott, *Framing the Audience: Art and the Politics of Culture in the United States, 1929-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 12-13; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

Gramsci's hegemony allowed Williams to study cultural ideas in terms of their relation to the totality of social life, and culture as part of the active processes through which signification reaffirms the meaning and values of a dominant relations of a capitalist society. Williams' interpretation of Gramscian hegemony, thus, became his fulcrum for developing a theory for studying the material force of cultural ideas because it linked the development of culture with a society's relationships of power and ideology as not an abstract-able system of meanings of a class but part of the complex historical processes of lived experience.¹²⁵

It is in Williams' use of hegemony and conception of culture as contextual practices within a lineage of Western Marxist theories of historical analysis that we can see cultural materialism's usefulness as a framework for examining garden city history. Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Williams argued, requires attention to the historical complexity involved in the process of a hegemonic formation, and the instances of change, variation, and contradiction that occur within hegemony's structures and use in domination. The historical nature of hegemony and culture saturates Williams' interpretation, as his perspective is founded on the real social and material conditions of lived experience: hegemony entails "a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming." Indeed, Gramsci's lack of a precise definition of hegemony—or "cultural hegemony" following Jackson Lears—forces one to understand the notion in relation to various historical and intellectual contexts. Williams utilized this necessity for historical

¹²⁵ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 108-14; Williams' list of references indicates he presumably relied on Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in his interpretation of "hegemony". For a good history of the life of Antonio Gramsci in relation to his thoughts on hegemony, see Antonio A. Santucci, *Antonio Gramsci* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010).

complexity and detail to underline why a nuanced Marxist theory of culture demands an account for historical complexity and contextual precision in how cultural ideas become articulated. Gramsci's hegemony allowed Williams a theoretical means of transcending historically-epochal analysis of culture, and towards more contextually-specific and details historical analyses that could still be understood as elements within a social totality.¹²⁶

This becomes the essence of studying history through a cultural materialist theoretical framework. Within a particular historical context, the productive power of cultural ideas, signification, and practices derives from their positions within the “complex interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance” that comprises historically particular cultural process. Culture, in other words, is not abstract, but *lived* and *actively* elements as they are organized and shaped by the relations of everyday life, the particular mode of capitalist production, and dominant systems of meaning in the society.¹²⁷ In order to account for the international variations, relations, and contradictions within a whole cultural process, particular so that one can identify how a cultural formation related to capitalist hegemony, Williams differentiates between “dominant” ideas, forms and practices—that is, those forms of significance which reproduce bourgeois social relation and practices—and “residual” and “emergent” forms of cultural signification: respectively, elements that appear as a cultural traditions and forms derived from the past, and those that are newly created and arising through the productive processes

¹²⁶ Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” 8-9; Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony,” 568-9.

¹²⁷ Jane Bryson, “Dominant, Emergent, and Residual Culture: The Dynamics of Organizational Change,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 6 (2008): 743-757.

within the present. A cultural materialist history studies cultural ideas, forms, and practices in terms of their complex dominant, residual, and emergent contents, thereby revealing not only the complexity of historical and cultural processes, but the ways the ideological and cultural become productive forces within capitalist relations. Moran encapsulates dominant, residual, and emergent practices within her notion of the “social logic of capitalism”: the ways in which a specific cultural formation—in Moran’s case, the concept of identity—became embedded in the production of a way of life and system of meaning that socially reproduced the “logic” of the context’s mode of capitalism. By incorporating cultural materialism as part of my theoretical framework, I can study cultural ideas not only in relation to context, contingency, and in terms of their permeation within a mode of living, but approach the ideational (the realm of ideas and signification) as a contingent force with material consequences within the organization of capitalist power relations.¹²⁸

In addition, Williams’ elucidation of his elusive concept of “structures of feeling” showcases the potential compatibility of cultural materialism as a framework for capturing the historical relations between the cultural ideas of garden city planning and the materiality contexts of people’s sensual social and cultural experiences within particular places, environments, and livelihoods. “Structure of feeling” emerges in *Marxism and Literature* as a way of capturing the tension in people’s real experiences as they negotiate between “social forms”—articulated traditions, educational and social institutions, indeed, cultural ideas, formations, and values—and “social consciousness”, how social forms are “lived, actively, in real

¹²⁸ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121-127; Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*, 65-67.

relationships...” Williams’ exploration of “structures of feeling” was his way of grasping how people exist and live in between the “received interpretation” of social forms and the “practical experience” of social consciousness. In this negotiating state, sensual lived experience is only in the process of being articulated: the material context of complex living that inevitable entails a mixture and interweaving of dominant, emergent, and residual elements, since it is composed of “what is actually being lived, and “what it is thought is being lived.”¹²⁹ For a historical topic in which modern, emergent practices were imbued with nostalgia values of health and nature, Williams’ attention to the unarticulated aspects of historical experience and people’s social values and relationships is quite useful. In *The Country and the City*, for example, Williams explored how people’s “idealization” of “settlements” in history fostered “a real structure of values” fueled by their “deep and persistent feelings” about the places and environments where they lived. Allowing “feeling” to denote experiences of settlement that are personal and lived—yet difficult to articulate into coherent social forms since it is formed of practical, sensual living—he wrote of the inherent class contradictions between those “who can settle in a reasonable independence”—whose livelihoods are not helpless to the changing mode of production and can idealize and live in a settlement of their choosing—and the “majority” who face pressure to change their sensual attachments to place because of the forces of the capitalist mode. For the “majority,” the change of settlement, and its associated changes of feeling, “can become a prison: a long disheartening and

¹²⁹ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 128-131; Devika Sharma and Frederik Tygstrup, *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 1-2.

despair, under an imposed rigidity of conditions.”¹³⁰ By devoting attention to culturally complex “structures of feeling”, Williams’ historical and cultural analysis can capture the interactions between the ideal and the practical, the nostalgic/residual and the modern and emergent, the cultural and the material.

As I explained earlier, cultural materialism represents a “constructionist” approach to studying past contexts. Alun Munslow, in his “history” of historical practices, cites cultural Marxist, histories informed by modernization theories, and French *Annales* histories as representative constructionist histories: histories which employ theories and preconceived frameworks to make sense of evidence from the past and reveal “general rules” or patterns of behavior. Munslow’s outline is more rigid in its interpretation than Thompson’s own elucidation of Marxist social and cultural histories; “Historical materialism,” Thompson asserts, “employs concepts...as expectations rather than as rules...History knows no regular verbs.” Regardless of the rigidity of Munslow’s depiction of constructionist historical interpretation, he acknowledges that, in the case of cultural Marxist inquiry, the incorporation of an explanatory framework does not translate into “fitting events into a preconceived pattern.” To the contrary, cultural Marxist histories “enriches” understandings of historical agency, in part due to the conscious decision to write history as a “form of political commitment” and a historically-informed intervention into present politics.¹³¹ This showcases cultural materialism as a bridge connecting postmodern critiques of historical knowledge creation as inseparable from the

¹³⁰ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 84-85.

¹³¹ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 24-7, 118; Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, 62.

historian's social position, and the use of theoretically-informed frameworks based within a politicized tradition like Marxian historical materialism. The politics of the historian becomes related to both the theoretical framework and the contemporary significance of the historical inquiry.

This explication of cultural materialism, following Williams and Moran, offers a possible resolution to Hall's "problem of ideology" without abandoning the historical materialist tradition of focusing on explanatory theories as irrevocably contextual and formed from within "real" relations of material production. Williams, Moran argues, does not distinguish between the cultural and the material spheres of social reality in his version of culturalism materialism. The cultural and the material are integrative categories: more than that, what is culture is material within one's social reality in cultural materialism. Thus, Hall's question of studying "how social ideas arise" within a materialist theory becomes mute in a cultural materialist paradigm because ideas are seen in everyday practice as holding a material and potentially causal value. Rather than seeking remedy, as Hall did, in the insight of the structural Marxism of Louis Althusser, Williams' approach remains indebted to the consciousness of human agents and their role in the culturally material relations of past reality. The theory is not developed, to borrow cultural scholar Lawrence Grossberg's words, "independently of the concrete specificities of the conjuncture," but it is part and parcel in the study of the relations of historical consciousness and the material manifestation of cultural elements within past contexts.¹³² For a dissertation

¹³² Hall, "The Problem of Ideology," 29; Hall, "Cultural Studies," 57-72; Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies and Deleuze-Guattari, Part 1," *Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1(2013): 1.

studying the how the advancement of the English garden city movement was informed by nineteenth-century British and American ideas on health, nature, and the embodiment of ideal living, Williams' approach, furthered and extended by Moran and others, allows historians to blur the boundaries between the poetic/fictional and still consider the material causality of the cultural.

Towards an “Ecological Marxist” Cultural Materialism

A key problematic emerges in pursuing a cultural materialist historical analysis that attempts to engage with embodied environmental historiography and the historical study of relations between bodies and environments: how should one consider, conceptualize the “natural” or “environmental” within a cultural materialist approach? For Moran, her central concern is in the materiality of identity within modern capitalist societies. Her explication of cultural materialism does not necessarily devote considerable attention to the materiality of ideas of the natural/environmental/ecological within the totalizing social reality of the cultural. The constitutive elements of signification and communication in society—presumably including ideas of the natural or environmental—are inherent and assumed within the historical complexity of cultural transformations: ideas and perceptions of the environmental are expressed within cultural processes, articulated in contexts with “an ongoing past.”¹³³ But, does that present an epistemological

¹³³ Andreas Malm, *The Progress of This Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World* (New York: Verso, 2017).

problem if ideas of the “natural” are subsumed within the “cultural”? In *Keywords*, Williams asserted that “nature” is the English language’s “most complex word,” distinguishing variable, with often contradictory historical meanings related to a thing’s “essential quality,” the world’s “inherent force,” and “the material world itself”. This implies a history in which humans have come to define the “natural” and environmental in culturally complex ways, blurring the boundaries between the human, the cultural and the natural.¹³⁴

Recent scholars of biopolitics have spoken to the salience of “new materialist” theories in capturing the active, forceful qualities of the material without privileging the role of humans or opposing “nature” with “culture”. These conversations has extended into the realm of qualitative inquiries into sport, health, and physical culture, as scholars use the insight to rethink assumptions and dimensions of embodied subjectivity and the agentic properties of matter. In my reading of “new materialist” theories, however, I have found that the prioritization of theoretical nuance and jargoned complexity sometimes comes at the expense of generalizing and fossilizing “older forms of materialism,” with early materialist theories presented as unable to conceptualize the material processes of life as mere forms of “vulgar economism” positing an “inactive” base of determinations upon which the superstructural arose.¹³⁵ This is not to downplay or diminish how new materialist

¹³⁴ Moran, *Identity and Capitalism*; Williams, *Keywords*, 219-24.

¹³⁵ Thomas Lemke, “New Materialisms: Foucault and the ‘Government of Things,’” *Theory, Culture & Society* 4 (2015): 3-25; Simone Fullagar, “Post-qualitative inquiry and the new materialist turn: implications for sport, health and physical culture research,” *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 2 (2017): 247-257. For a foundational source on “new materialist” theories of the agency of matter, see Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs* 3 (2003): 801-831.

theories have illuminated the problematic universalist, Western assumptions of human-centered subjectivity within historical, social, and cultural theories. Rather, my aim is to further their theoretical and analytical nuance by complicating our understanding of materialist theories of social and cultural production and highlighting their continued salience. As Immanuel Wallerstein notes, “a theoretical formulation is only understandable and usable in relation to the alternative formulation it is explicitly or implicitly attacking...”¹³⁶ My point is there is value in a fundamentally historical and cultural materialist dissertation that seeks to converse with scholarship in embodied environmental history—the “gathering of bodies within the field of environmental history”; studies of the body as the material “middle ground” through which signification of the “natural” and the “cultural” have historically intertwined. The question is how to calibrate such a framework in order to study the processes of historical capitalist production as processes in material alienation involves relations with at once the corporeal, the cultural, and the natural.¹³⁷

Recent developments in “ecological Marxist” scholarship posit the dialectical relations between the ecological with the cultural with a cultural materialist inquiry, insight vital to adding an ecological nuance to a cultural materialist historical

¹³⁶ Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism with Capitalist Civilization*, 9. I want to be sure I emphasize here of the importance of new materialist theories of matter, as they derive from important feminist and post-colonial critiques of subjectivity and agency. As an example of such key works, see Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2013). My point is that new materialist insight can only be furthered by more nuanced understandings of “older” theories of materialism. I do not discuss cultural materialism here as a universal, static theoretical framework for all contexts of social life, but for specifically the study of international garden city movement planning. After all, it was Marx who wrote in *Grundrisse* of the production of life as always “production at a definite stage in historical development...”

¹³⁷; Maher, “Body Counts,” 163; Sellers, “Thoreau’s Body,” 487.

framework. By ecological Marxism, I refer to works by John Bellamy Foster, Paul Burkett, and others who have laid the general thesis that Marx's originating writings, particularly his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, *Grundrisse*, and the third volume of *Capital*, entailed a sophisticated discussion of the role of human alienation from nature as part of his interrogation of capitalist processes of production. More specifically, Foster underlines Marx's concept of "social metabolism": that the human labor process inherently entails not only one's relation to the product of their labors, but the material relation between human production and nature. In a sense, the maintenance of life—and in capitalism the alienation of humans from their labor—is at once culturally and naturally material. The crisis of anthropocentric climate change is the result of capitalism effecting a "metabolic rift" between humans and the environment by the forces of production and processes of social alienation. This developing interpretation of Marx's writings, which situates his critique of capitalism as developing complementary to nineteenth-century developments in scientific and Darwinian theories of material nature, rethinks the "natural" factors of capitalist processes of production, calling on Marxist analyses to place nature within the center core of materiality theories of history.¹³⁸

Foster presents his ecological Marxist case by arguing that Marx's writings pursued a materialist conception of both nature and society. Marx had read widely and incorporated research during his time on physical science issues like agriculture,

¹³⁸ John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); John Bellamy Foster and Paul Burkett, *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique* (Boston: Brill, 2016); Paul Burkett, *Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); John Bellamy Foster, "Marxism and Ecology: Common Fonts of a Great Transition," *Monthly Review* 67, no. 7(2015), accessed February 7, 2017, <https://monthlyreview.org/2015/12/01/marxism-and-ecology/>.

soil degradation, and the industrialization of food production. In Foster's conception, Marx's materialist theory of history development in a dialectical relation to Darwinian and other materialist theories of science: they both emerged from interconnected source pools of nineteenth-century knowledge on science, nature and society. For this reason, Foster interprets Marxist materialism "as both an *ontological* and an epistemological category": Marx's "ontology of social being", to inference György Lukács' work, entailed metabolic relations between human labor, society and nature. This gives an ecological interpretation of Marx's work a "realist" ontology, for it acknowledges the objective existence of a physical world related, but distinct from human thought.¹³⁹ Marx's historical materialism, in Foster's interpretation, depended upon a materialist understanding of society in relation to materialist understanding of the physical world.

By underscoring Marx's concepts of social metabolism and the "metabolic rift" between humans, society and nature brought my capitalism's logic of production, ecological Marxist scholarship offer a fruitful way of historically examining what Del Watson called "the human-social relationship to nature" and the role of the body, specifically human laboring activities, as the mediator between natural and social/cultural processes. In a sense, humans are seen as living between "nature" and "society," as the sensual nexus that allows social/cultural systems to come into a productive relation with natural systems through the act of work and laboring activities. By speaking of a "metabolic rift" between humans and their

¹³⁹ Foster, *Marx's Ecology*, 5-7; John Bellamy Foster, "Marx as a Food Theorist," *Monthly Review* 68, no. 7 (2016): 1-22; John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark, "Marxism and the Dialectics of Ecology," *Monthly Review* 68, no. 5(2016): 1-17; György Lukács, *Marx's Basic Ontological Principles* (London: Merlin Press, 1978); István Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

natural relations with the environment—caused by the capitalist logic of accumulation, division of labor, and division of town and country—the concepts allow for a focus on “metabolic restoration”: “a need for humans, in producing their livelihoods, to re-establish their relationships to the land and biosphere...”¹⁴⁰ On its own, such theories privilege traditional concepts of labor and work. In a theoretical congruence with cultural materialism, however, the productive qualities of the embodied human and laboring experience extend into the realms of cultural signification and historical construction. It is here that the theoretical framework becomes capable of capturing cultural ideas and notions of health, nature, and embodiment and analyzing their complex signification within material contexts and in the midst of the social relations of the capitalist mode.

The consequences of following Foster’s ecological Marxist interpretation is that it impels a historical materialist-informed paradigmatic approach (like cultural materialism) to consciously understand and posit the dialectical relations in history as triadic: that the physical “natural” world inevitably mediates historical relations between the human and the production of social and cultural life. This does not deny the social construction of cultural signification and its impact on perceptions of what socially constitutes “natural” or “environmental” spaces and forms, but rather rethinks the constitutive determinative elements that comprise the “base” of material conditions and its relation to the contextual mode of production. In this sense, one can see the benefit of these ecological interpretations of Marxism in that they further

¹⁴⁰ Del Watson, *The Political Economy of Global Warming: The Terminal Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 65-66, 74, 170-171; Rebecca Clausen and John Bellamy Foster, “The Need for Ecological Restoration,” *Monthly Review* 4 (2017): 59-62.

Raymond Williams and his broadening of interpretations of Marx's "productive forces" from narrow definitions of economic relationships to "the primary production of society itself, and of men themselves, material production and reproduction of real life."¹⁴¹ Cultural materialism and ecological Marxism converge in their depiction of the materialist conception of history, society and nature, and the incorporation of the cultural and natural in the historical processes advancing surplus value and the reproduction of capitalist relations. Thus, when Marx writes in *Grundrisse* of "production" always involving "appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society," cultural materialist and ecological Marxist interpretations focus on the natural and cultural as necessary components in the production and reproduction of life.¹⁴² In this kind of complementary framework, the body can be conceptualized as the material-natural-cultural instrument through which humans understand their relation to both the physical world and society. The materially productive potential of historical ideas, in other words, are at once cultural, interrelated with people's intrinsic relations with the natural, and productively implicated in the processes of life and society.¹⁴³

Raymond Williams, the Body, and Ecological Marxism

¹⁴¹ Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," 5-6.

¹⁴² "Grundrisse: Introduction," Marxists Internet Archive, accessed 21 October 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch01.htm>.

¹⁴³ Foster, *Marx's Ecology*, 5-9; I am not arguing that an ecological Marxist view of history counters previous important work on the social construction of ideas of nature and its links to relations of power. In fact, I see my cultural materialist, ecological Marxism-informed perspective as reinforcing and adding nuance to those previous historical arguments. For an example of what I mean by works studying the social construction of ideas of nature, see Merchant, *The Death of Nature*.

The relationship between scientific materialist theories of nature and Marxist historical materialism was not lost on Williams. He understood the “ironic” influence of the development of nineteenth-century ecological theories on European socialist movements during the period. As early as 1978, he wrote, “there has been an unusual uneasiness between Marxism and the natural sciences,” noting the potential “gaps in knowledge” in the development of Marxist theories as a result of a lack of rapprochement. Williams’ concept of livelihood—his way of historicizing the “natural” and showing his ways of life constitute integrative cultural and natural elements—exhibits his understanding of the conceptual danger of valorizing culture over nature and misrepresenting their binary-transcendent historical relations. Both cultural ideas of nature and the human interaction with the physical world were constitutive of Williams’ approach to the materiality of ordinary life. Whether Williams’ interpreted Marx’s writings in a similar fashion to Foster and Burkett is mute, for in his concept of “livelihood” Williams revealed how his cultural materialist sensibilities attended to discussions of the environmental and semiotic binaries separating the “natural” from the “cultural”. Moreover, Williams’ approach appears historically complementary to recent contentions by environmental historians like Sara Pritchard and Thomas Zeller as to the “illusory” perception of historical processes like industrialization as antithetical to nature. Thus, I do not introduce the insight of ecological Marxist insight as a counterpoint to Williams’ elucidation of cultural materialism, but rather to reinforce how it is possible, within a fundamentally

cultural materialist conception of history, to see both nature and culture as “ordinary”.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, Williams’ study of the historical relations between city and country life in his 1973 book *The City and the Country* exemplified the potential suitability of cultural materialism as a way of studying the power of cultural ideas in the production of material life and people’s understanding of their environments. The focus of Williams’ study was discussions of city and country landscape and experience within English literature texts since the sixteenth century, emphasizing how capitalism reproduces distinctions between the two realms of living and how people’s views of landscape and environments, urban or rural, shifted in their dialectical relation to the other and to the contextual mode of production.¹⁴⁵ His central concern lay in how the texts inferred how ordinary people understood the changes to both urban and rural spaces brought by the emergent industrial capitalist mode of production. This form of relational and dialectical analysis allowed Williams to see the city, following Ira Katznelson, as not only an integral, spatial expression of the dominant mode of production, but an articulation of that mode that is in a “state of reciprocal need and tension with the countryside.”¹⁴⁶ What he argued was that these ideas of rural and urban life were constantly being made and remade not only in their relation, but that

¹⁴⁴ Raymond Williams, “Socialism and Ecology,” *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 6, no. 1(1995): 41; Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1980), 104-5; Foster, *Marx’s Ecology*, 8-9; Rod Giblett, “Nature is Ordinary too,” *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 6(2012): 928-9; Sara B. Pritchard and Thomas Zeller, “The Nature of Industrialization,” in Martin Reuss and Stephen H. Cutcliffe, eds., *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 71-100.

¹⁴⁵ Alexander Wilson also discusses this in a chapter in his book *The Culture of Nature*. See Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), 193-222.

¹⁴⁶ Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 28-29.

the construction of urban and rural cultural was a relational and dialectical process linked to particular stages of capitalist production. One's social meaning of the country was not made in isolation, but in relation to their social meaning of the city, to the point that their conception of the state of urban culture shaped the meaning they constructed regarding the country. "The country and the city," Williams wrote, "are changing historical realities, both in themselves and in their interrelations." This illuminated a method of dissecting the capitalist mode of production's logic of the division of labor by approaching the construction town and country life in relational, interactive terms, to the point that the boundaries between the city and the country as seen as historical constructions shaped by the mode of production's dominant cultural formations. Williams saw ordinary people's ideas and images of the city and the country as "ways of responding to a whole social development," as cultural responses in terms of people's relation to industrial capitalism. By seeing images and ideas of city and country life in terms of their interrelation and rather than their contrast, one can then see "the real shape of the underlying crisis": the ways in which capitalist ideology imposes social forms predicated on the separation of town and country for the purposes of regulating the production of capital and surplus value.¹⁴⁷

This understanding of the capitalist mode of production's logical dependence upon the division of town and country permeates not just cultural materialist works like Williams' *The Country and the City*, but the very foundation of Marxist historical materialism, particularly interpretations by ecological Marxists. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels centrally noted the degradation of countryside and the

¹⁴⁷ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 289-306.

division between town and rural life within their critique of capitalism. The bourgeois, Marx and Engels wrote, “has subjected the country to the rule of the towns,” causing the creation of “enormous cities” and intensifying divisions between urban and rural population. As Marx later noted in *Capital*, the division was not simply a byproduct of the forces of production, but part of the necessary conditions: “the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour...forms the prelude to the history of capital.”¹⁴⁸ In the history of modern Western thought, however, meanings of “nature” have often been contradictory, with urban reformers declaring wholly landscaped, developed and altered spaces as “natural” and “naturally healthful”. The point is, following William Cronon, to see “[i]deas of nature” as based within “cultural contexts”, and as ideas that held important consequences in the contextual production and reproduction of spaces of living.¹⁴⁹ In this we can see Williams’ approach complementing those of other historians and ecological Marxists in rethinking the history of the separation of town and country, and how the approaches of cultural materialism and ecological Marxism congeal in their attempt to critique the dialectical relations between the historical, material, cultural, and “natural”.

The planners, architects and thinkers of the international garden city movement sought to resolve the separation between town and country within

¹⁴⁸ “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed January 10, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>; Karl Marx, “Chapter Thirty-Two: Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation,” in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed February 2, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch32.htm>.

¹⁴⁹ Cronon, “Introduction,” 23-35; Martin Empson, *Land and Labour: Marxism, Ecology and Human History* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2014), 82-85.

capitalist society through the restructuring of living environments and the resettlement of urban workers. They spoke of the state of the large cities during their time through evocative terms such as “overcrowding” and “congestion” to depict the city as anathema to their idealization of healthy living. They generated perspectives on industrial capitalism’s deleterious effects on the urban working class through thinkers who argued against the economic system—Anglo men such as the British Marxist William Morris, who profoundly influenced the many of the central figures in the creation of the first English garden city at Letchworth. Morris argued in front of the Hammersmith Socialist Society in 1892,

Town and country are generally put in a kind of contrast, but we will see what kind of a contrast there has been, is, and may be between them; how far that contrast is desirable or necessary, or whether it may not be possible in the long run to make the town a part of the country and the country a part of the towns.

This was garden cities purported to accomplish: a harmonizing of town and country life to create the conditions for healthier people. Yet, despite the political affiliations of influential thinkers such as Morris, garden cities were, at their very foundation, attempts at reforming the urban environment within the conditions and relations of capitalism. Howard affirmed the importance of reuniting town and country life by arguing that “[h]uman society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together,” but he fully intended the creation of such communities as private ventures within a capitalist economy, and a “peaceful” means of creating “healthier,” more “efficient” people without exacerbating class tensions. Unwin, personally acquainted with and influenced by Morris, asserted that the garden city movement sought “a more harmonious combination of city and country, dwelling house and garden”—but

in the case of Letchworth, his prescribed social and aesthetic arrangements were paternalist in their imposition, and beyond the economic feasibility of local laborers.¹⁵⁰ The international garden city movement is a complicated history of spatial and architectural planning, and the planners' cultural ideas of health and nature were complex concoctions of residual and emergent forms that ultimately served the interests of dominant, bourgeois urban planning ideologies. It is this historical complexity of ideas of space and healthy living that I hope to capture through the insight of cultural materialism and ecological Marxism.

Conclusion

Because I am studying historical contexts in which the cultural and ideational were productively employed in the shaping of material built environments, and human definitions of the “natural” and “healthy” had deep material consequences in prescribing and landscaping of spaces of living, my dissertation employs a historical-theoretical informed by both cultural materialist and ecological Marxist theories. The framework functions as a kind of Cultural Materialist-Ecological Marxist “Magnet”; just as Ebenezer Howard (as chapter two will explain) believed his “Garden City” would function as a “Town-Country Magnet,” marrying the benefits and attractions of both spheres of life within a single planned town, I see the theoretical paradigms as mutually complementary when mobilized to the task of studying the embodied

¹⁵⁰ William Morris, “Town and Country [portion],” *The William Morris Internet Archive*, accessed February 3, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1892/town.htm>; Ebenezer Howard, *To-Morrow*, 9; Unwin, *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding*, 1.

environmental ideas of international garden city movement planning in British and American history. This is helped by Williams' own theoretical consciousness of the role of the ecological in material and cultural contexts.¹⁵¹ The central premise of historical analysis remains the dialectical "dialogue" between social being and social consciousness—between the material "base" and the social relations of the "superstructural"—but the realm of cultural ideas are placed in their production relation to the material and natural, to be the point of dissolving the perceived abstract boundaries between them.¹⁵² By following Raymond Williams' and Marie Moran's elucidations of cultural materialism in conversation with the insight of ecological Marxism, I am able to focus on the ways in which cultural ideas concerning nature and healthy living were defined in particular contexts of town and regional planning, promoted, and materialized in the design and creation of planned garden city communities in Britain and the United States. As admittedly a constructionist approach to historical representation, I am conscious of my choice in employing a prefigured, cultural theory-informed framework for organizing and interpreting historical discourses into a narrative form. I see this consciousness of my theories and methods as emboldening, as it allows me to highlight and examine my own relation between form and content in my representation of the garden city past, and link the politicized heritage of my historical approach to the contemporary significance of studying the history of how garden cities were planned in the heyday of the international movement.

¹⁵¹ Williams, "Socialism and Ecology," 41-57.

¹⁵² Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, 10-12.

Chapter Two: ‘Town-Country’ Bodies: Nature, Physical Culture, and the Garden City in Ebenezer Howard’s *To-Morrow*

His ideal came from a realization, and his realization came in part from reading a popular American novel. In a speech to the London Spiritualist Alliance on April 14, 1910, Ebenezer Howard told a story of how he came across a source of inspiration for writing *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, his book that helped catalyze what became the garden city movement. Howard’s calling, he proclaimed, arrived via a friend lending him a copy of the American socialist Edward Bellamy’s novel *Looking Backward*, about a man falling asleep in the year 1887 and awaking one hundred and thirteen years later to find American society transformed into socialist utopia with all industry and production nationalized and all citizens living in a beautiful, healthy urban landscape. Howard took the novel home “and read it in one sitting,” and it helped him realize that a utopian vision for a higher state of living through grand design could be practically achieved.¹⁵³

Howard’s newfound utopian vision, however, was a biopolitical vision in that he imagined how people could come to *embody* his ideals within this higher state of living. The politics and values of his vision, in a sense, were dependent upon the ways in which a newly structured built environment form, his garden city, would lead people to *actively live* and *embody* such ideals through their everyday activities and engagement with the surrounding landscape. One can see how such tacit forms of

¹⁵³ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996); Printed account of the address given by Ebenezer Howard on 'Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress', Given to the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Royal Society of British Artists, April 14 (published Apr 30) 1910, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

physical culture bubbled just at the surface of such garden city discourse—often in relation to one’s perception of the current state of modern urbanity—in Howard’s retelling of the morning after reading *Looking Backward*, an oft cited moment in garden city histories:

I shall never forget the next morning's experience. I went into some of the crowded parts of London, and as I passed through the narrow dark streets, saw the wretched dwellings in which the majority of people lived, observed on every hand the manifestations of a self-seeking order of society, and reflected on the absolute unsoundness of our economic system, there came to me an overpowering sense of the quite temporary nature of nearly all I saw, and of its entire unsuitability for the working life of the new order—the order of justice, unity, and friendliness. When I turned to 'Looking Backward' again, and read it very carefully and critically, although I perceived that its highly centralised and bureaucratically organised society would probably never come into being (and I certainly hoped it never would), yet the writer had permanently convinced me that our present industrial order stands absolutely condemned and is tottering to its fall, and that a new and brighter, because a juster, order must ere long take its place.¹⁵⁴

In the passage above, Howard’s articulation of the “wretched” conditions of urban and factory spaces and the “self-seeking order” of modern industrial capitalism rested on a perception that the nineteenth-century industrial city held an “unsuitability for working life.” He imagined this state of the city as the antithesis of what he imagined was the “proper” living environment for working class health and well-being: the English countryside. Yet, more than this, he imagined the bucolic as the ideal environment for working class physical culture, with his garden city as a vehicle for restoring British laboring bodies “to the land” and agricultural pursuits in tandem

¹⁵⁴ Printed account of the address given by Ebenezer Howard on 'Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress', Given to the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Royal Society of British Artists, April 14 (published Apr 30) 1910, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 34-5; Beavers, *Garden City Utopia*, 27; Miller, *Letchworth*, 11, 14.

with cultural “amenities.”¹⁵⁵ In part for this reason, Howard’s imagined garden city entailed romanticizing pastoral labor and spaces as a nostalgic self-regulator of national health and physical culture: combined with the careful planning of a completely modern, sanitary town, the community model, with its prescribed spaces of agriculture and countryside, would lead urban workers to live at a higher level of “justice, unity, and friendliness.” The prescribing and idealizing of particular forms and practices of urban and rural physical culture, as a result, played a key role in shaping the garden city palliative that Howard advocated in *To-morrow* in 1898. His physically and culturally healthy garden city ideal emerged from a milieu of influential ideas on health, nature, and healthy embodiment, that molded and were molded by Howard’s vision for a planned 30,000 person community “in which all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country, may be secured in perfect combination.”¹⁵⁶

As this chapter will show, the garden city ideal that emerged from the pages of Ebenezer Howard’s *To-Morrow* functioned as biopolitical blueprint for the social and physical reforming of working class health and embodied living: a call to create the ideal planned communities for remaking, improving and maintaining worker physical culture. While some scholars often link the “birth of biopolitics” to studies and critiques of twentieth-century neoliberalism, Daniel Shea reminds us that “the biological manipulation of human bodies” surfaced as “a political agenda as much in the last decades of the nineteenth century as in those of the twentieth.”¹⁵⁷ As they

¹⁵⁵ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Howard, *To-morrow*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*; Călin Cotoi, “Neoliberalism: A Foucauldian Perspective,” *International Review of Social Research* 1 (2011): 109-24; Michael A. Peters, “Foucault, Biopolitics,

employed Foucault's historical concept of governmentality to examine the history of nineteenth and twentieth-century urban governance, biopower scholars Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose wrote that Howard's garden city model was, in effect, "a kind of blueprint for a spatial machine that would render and regulate human sociality towards particular—governmental—ends." Studying how power becomes spatialized in the imagining and regulating of citizens within the city, they argued by the late nineteenth-century the body became a "problem for government," as bourgeois anxieties over urban degeneration and rural migration led to a problematizing of urban working class life and the creation of governing mechanisms to regulate biology, behavior, and morality. Howard's garden city model, along these lines, was the spatialization of Howard's middle class social vision: an imagining of a new "form of urban existence" he believed deviated from both capitalist and socialist visions of space. As a result, in terms of his physical cultural intentions, Howard's garden city implicitly reproduced the dominant class stratification of his time, for it was a reformist attempt to regulate the collective social body by repopulating urban workers onto prescribed and preconceived organizational and environmental form. There, workers would be socially and physically improved not only through the town's modernized civic, architectural, and housing layout, but by the prescribed bucolic and "civilized" physical cultural activities of the communities. Howard's garden city was a strategy to reshape the health and physical culture of the working class as much as it was a project in urban reform.¹⁵⁸

and the Birth of Neoliberalism," *Critical Studies in Education* 48 (2007): 165-78; Daniel P. Shea, "'Abortions of the Market': Production and Reproduction in *News from Nowhere*," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 32 (2010): 153.

¹⁵⁸ Osborne and Rose, "Governing Cities," 744-5, 748.

Yet, to examine the planned mechanisms and strategies through which the social and embodied relations were to be regulated within the garden city “spatial machine,” we must first understand how and why Howard imagined residents would be biologically and socially transforming by resettling in a garden city community. Thus, Howard’s *To-morrow* is a useful site for unpacking not only the role of embodiment within the community model, but their historical, cultural, and ideological relation to the writings and ideas of various individuals identified by garden city historians as the primary influences upon Howard and the movement. *To-morrow* was written within a complex cultural milieu in which utopian, socialist, anti-capitalist, and philosophical ideas circulated along with Victorian concerns over health, class strife, and the racial/imperialist discourses on the social and physical degeneration of the urban working class.¹⁵⁹ By focusing on how notions of embodiment surfaced within the pages of *To-morrow*, Howard’s ideal garden city body can be studied as a cultural-corporeal locus through which the politics and power relations of late Victorian, middle and upper class British society became articulated and implanted within calls for town and urban reform.

In this chapter, I argue that various ideologically-infused presumptions of the healthy body and healthy physical cultural pursuits figured prominently within the framework of Howard’s *To-morrow*, as well as his central premise that the

¹⁵⁹ See Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Pamela K. Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

decentralization and resettlement of people onto garden city towns adjacent to agricultural districts represented the healthiest form of late Victorian living. To explain my contention, I unpack and examine ideologies of embodiment and articulations of physical culture as they surfaced within the book, their origins in the various reform ideas of nineteenth-century radical, socialist, anarchist, and utopian thought, and their relation to Howard's articulated garden city archetype. Rather than (re)construct a narrative of Howard's process of explicating his garden city vision and his ideological/intellectual influences, the chapter traces and contextualizes the embodied dimensions and authorized physical cultural forms within *To-morrow* and their relation to the model's framework. Though garden city histories have long untangled and studied the various social thinkers who came to influence Howard's treatise, such cultural ideas were also articulated within a historical context in which discussions of urban and housing reform were often linked to particular bio-political ideals: notably, middle and upper-class perceptions of social and physical degeneration, and eugenicist, pro-rural discourses on social hygiene and racial decay.¹⁶⁰ By mapping and contextualizing the embodied allusions and dimensions within the social thinkers and works linked to Howard's *To-morrow*, the chapter illuminates the social and cultural politics enmeshed in the idealizing of embodiment within Howard's utopian imagination. As such, it lays the groundwork for understanding how garden city community projects became in part material vehicles

¹⁶⁰ Frederick H. A. Aalen, "English Origins," in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Stephen V. Ward (New York: E & FN Spon, 1992), 38; Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution*, 68-9; see Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Richard A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

imbued biopolitical guidelines and frameworks via the community's organization and planned relation to dwellings, nature, and space.

The theoretical and conceptual tools are available for historically examining the dialectical relations between conceptions of embodiment within Howard's *To-morrow* and the cultural and ideational contexts of each influential figure and text. Historians have long benefitted from T.J. Jackson Lears' explication of "cultural hegemony": following Gramsci, the ways cultural ideas historically became mobilized in the interest of a particular social group or class towards the domination or acquiring of consent of a subordinate group. In this the realm of culture and ideas can be studied as simultaneously autonomous and implicated with the power relations of a particular context of the capitalist mode of production.¹⁶¹ Raymond Williams and William Robbins explicated capitalism as a "body of ideas and values" related to a particular historical and contextual economic system: ideas and values that come to be permeate and penetrate historical culture.¹⁶² If we follow body studies scholar Bryan Turner in seeing the body as "a system of signs which stand for an express relations of power," it follows to explore the ways garden city idealizations were imbued with conceptions of embodiment linked to the industrial capitalist values and power relations of nineteenth-century Britain and the visions of middle and upper class reformers responding to the perceived crisis of their times: the state of modern

¹⁶¹ Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," 567-593; see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*.

¹⁶² Williams, *Keywords*, 50-2; William G. Robbins, "In Pursuit of Historical Explanation: Capitalism as a Conceptual Tool for Knowing the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 3 (1999): 277-293.

capitalism and its physical and sociocultural effects on life in urban industrial centers.¹⁶³

Is This a Biography of Sir Ebenezer Howard?

In their study of the key aspects and significance of *To-morrow* within garden city history, biographies of Sir Ebenezer Howard usually first highlight and summarize the important and relevant influences on his thought and reform ideas on articulating the garden city as a model of urban, spatial, and social reform. Familiar names from the history of nineteenth-century reform movements routinely arise in their narratives: American socialist Bellamy and radical economist Henry George, British anti-modernist, art critic and social thinker John Ruskin, and the Russian anarchist and ex-pat Peter Kropotkin are some of more notable in terms of the available monographs on Howard's life. The result is well-trodden, often recapitulated chronological and teleological narrative of Howard's life and intellectual development, with *To-morrow* positioned as the synthesized product of his accumulated knowledge of nineteenth-century ideas on health, housing, and the conditions of the nineteenth-century industrial city.¹⁶⁴ This has led to historical

¹⁶³ Turner, *The Body in Society*, 27; see also Vertinsky and Hargeaves, *Physical Culture, Power, and the Body*.

¹⁶⁴ Fishman, *Urban Utopians in the Twentieth Century*, 27; Howard biographer Dugald Macfadyen begins his discussion of *To-morrow* through the importance of Edward Bellamy's influence. See Macfadyen, *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement*, 21-3; Robert Beevers and Stanley Buder devote multiple chapters before getting to *To-morrow*'s published form, detailing the various influences and historical development of Howard's ideas. See Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 3-62; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 49-56; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 3-15.

narratives that focus on the biography of Howard himself and a conception of the historical figure as, though not the “lone original thinker” of the garden city, nonetheless the singular “synthesizer of pre-existing modes of thinking,” since it was Howard who ultimately authored the foundational treatise of the garden city movement.¹⁶⁵

Garden city histories routinely cite Howard and his writing *To-morrow* as the determinative catalyst and driving force behind the rise of the early twentieth-century international garden city movement. Despite a level of uncertainty on Howard’s life history, owing to only a fraction of Howard’s papers and documents having survived, these predominant narratives leave little need for restating his biography.¹⁶⁶ The goal here is not to question established narratives of Howard in terms of his role in the rise of the garden city movement, but to excavate the role of health and physical culture in his eventual articulation of the community model. Howard was born into a largely middle to lower-middle class London family in 1850 with a genealogical lineage of small farmers and tradespeople on both sides—perhaps a historical coincidence that

¹⁶⁵ Aalen, “English Origins,” 39.

¹⁶⁶ Without fail, garden city historiography assume Howard’s and *To-morrow*’s place as the catalyst of the garden city movement. This is not to critique their position, but to underscore the utility of . Though it would fascinating and illuminate to critique the importance of Howard and *To-morrow* within garden city histories, I will leave that question for future writing projects. See Kargon and Molella, *Invented Edens*, 7; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 29-32; Ward, *The Garden City*, 2; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*; David Schuyler, “Introduction,” in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 3-4; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 1-2, 44-69; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, vii; Miller, *Letchworth*, 8-20; C.B. Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns: A Contribution to the Study of Town Development and Regional Planning* (Letchworth: The Temple Press, 1949), 51-3. Ward wrote of reports, suggested by Howard’s contemporary Frederic Osborn, that Howard’s second wife made a concerted effort to burn the bulk of his written materials as part of her “lack of sympathy” with her late husband’s work and the garden city movement, causing most of Howard’s writings to disappear before the possibility of historical scrutiny. See Stephen V. Ward, “Ebenezer Howard: His Life and Times,” in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 15.

nevertheless suggests an inclination to romanticize British pastoral living. He grew up, as biographer Robert Beevers put it, in “[t]he London of...Charles Dickens, imbued with the same sense of optimistic vitality despite extremes of wealth and poverty.”¹⁶⁷ His apparent modest, lower-middle-class sensibility is a reoccurring theme in narratives on Howard’s life. Newspaper obituaries praised his “practical idealism”: his modesty, selflessness, ideals rescued the British working classes from the “intolerable” conditions and “evils” of overcrowded urban life—bringing “Utopia transformed into bricks and mortar”—assuring him “noble immortality” because he created “one of the great constructive ideas of our time” without succumbing to the ways of socialist “agitators” such as the journalist Henry Hyde Champion.¹⁶⁸

Historians note the modest, yet important qualities that fueled his abilities as a “practical idealist.” As Peter Hall and Colin Ward summarize, Howard up to 1898 “was an obscure 48-year old shorthand writer living in genteel poverty” with his wife and children “in a modest house in north London,” but he had the powers of concentration, preoccupation, likeability, and command of public speaking.¹⁶⁹ In the eyes of the contemporary observer, Howard is presented as one who seemingly had the necessary personal wherewithal, intellectual curiosity, and passion for reform to bring the ideal to practical fruition.

Rather than (re)present *To-morrow*’s significance within Howard’s biographical narrative, the focus here in on the text’s dialectical relation to the

¹⁶⁷ Schuyler, “Introduction,” 1-13; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 5-8; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 1-2, 4-8.

¹⁶⁸ Folder "Obituary notices from various newspapers reporting the death of Ebenezer Howard", Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

¹⁶⁹ Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 3-5.

cultural, environmental, and biopolitical history of late Victorian and British urban reformist thought, with specific attention to historical ideologies on the reformation/regulation of the body and the spatialization of such intentions within visions of planned towns and communities. Jackson Lears, in his influential interpretation of Gramsci's cultural hegemony, reminded us of hegemonic "ambiguities of consent": the conflict and contradictions that arise between a person's conscious thoughts and the embedded values of their actions.¹⁷⁰ Howard's articulation of his garden city ideal epitomized this kind of cultural ambiguity, as he sought to merge, through the idealization of particular physical cultural forms, modern values of structuring and rationalizing the urban built environment with a nostalgia for pastoral physical culture. Thus, the chapter contextualizes and analyzes the cultural elements and ideas that swirled around and were expressed within *To-morrow*, studying the tension between Howard's explication and the Late Victorian structure of feeling concerning urban working class degeneration, modern physical culture, and bucolic embodiment.¹⁷¹ In many ways the chapter follows the general approach taken by Raymond Williams' in his book *The Country and the City*, in that the chapter relates conceptions of embodiment within *To-morrow* to the text and author's social, cultural, and material context.¹⁷² The objective here is historical exegesis, with Howard's historical text *To-morrow* its central concern and focus of analysis. Howard's book was in many ways a cultural product of a middle class perspective of Late Victorian urban life, formed of assumptions and ideas that were

¹⁷⁰ Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," 569.

¹⁷¹ "Structures of Feeling" is a cultural materialist concept discussed in chapter one of this dissertation. See Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 128-35.

¹⁷² See Williams, *The Country and the City*.

shaped not only by the ideas of Howard himself but in their dialectical relation to the cultural contexts through which the book emerged. By thematically mapping the dimensions of embodiment ideologies within Howard's book, one can then see the ideational complexity of the cultural milieu in which Howard operated, as well as how each ideological influence functioned with the framework of the garden city model as vectors for the mobilized of bio-political regulatory strategies.

The body and forms of physical culture were central to Howard's biopolitical objectives as he articulated his garden city model in *To-Morrow*, particularly in ways that linked countryside spaces with agricultural labor and its perceived natural healthfulness as a romanticized method of British living. Because of this, Howard's text and ideas entailed an ideational dimension of seeing the healthy body as requiring a more "natural" relation, through labor and leisure, with the English countryside. Cultural geographer Don Mitchell has long argued that landscapes, far from solely natural entities, are in fact socially constructed through the work of human bodies and the meanings attached to human labor.¹⁷³ The "acts" of human labor become the mediator through which human constructs (such as the marketplace) and "natural" landscapes come into relation in ways that, using Richard White's words, "blur the boundaries between the artificial and the natural."¹⁷⁴ Yet, the countryside, for Ebenezer Howard, was a space of leisure as much as romantic pastoral labor, with the healthfulness of the garden city dependent upon balancing the relation between the two with the surrounding rural landscape. In *To-Morrow*, leisure

¹⁷³ Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁴ Sackman, "Nature's Workshop," 29; White, "'Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?,' 173.

and labor constituted the socially constructed mechanisms through which British workers were to live healthier lives in the garden city. The objective of this chapter is to contextualize and understand how Howard came to articulate this relation between landscape, labor, and leisure through an idealized community model.

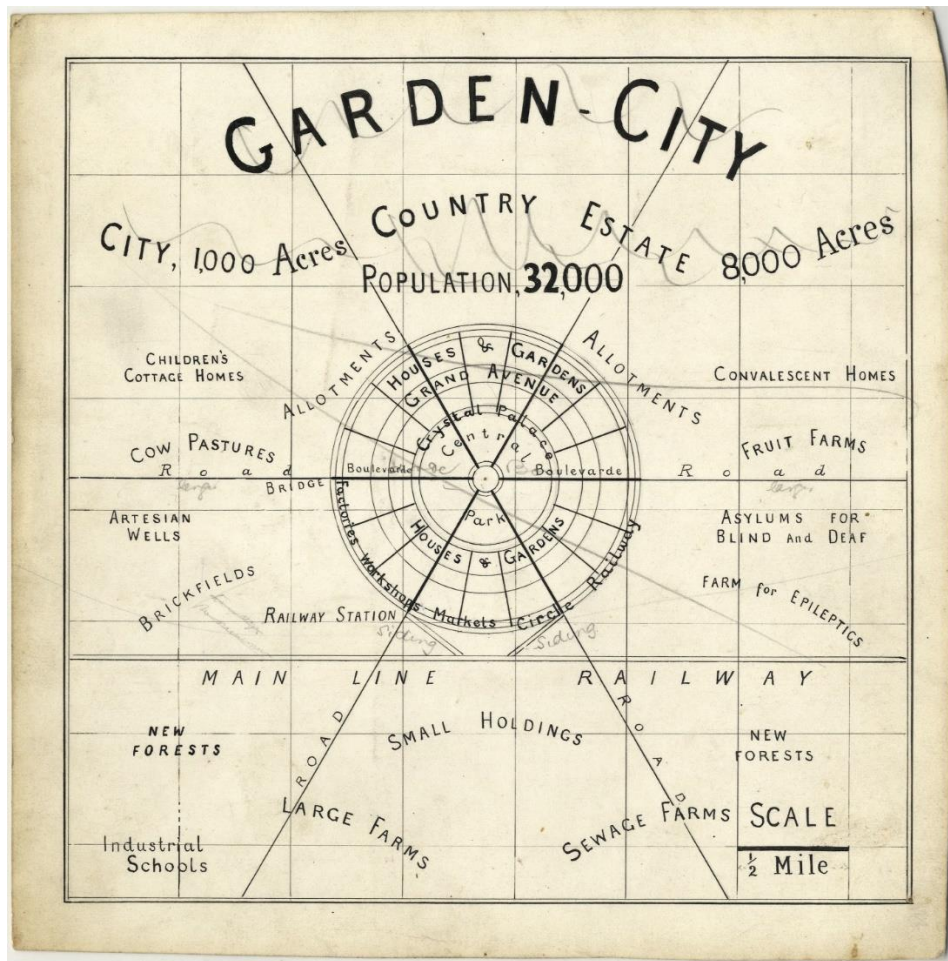


Figure 2.1 – Ebenezer Howard’s Draft of “Garden City” diagram number two (“County Estate population 32,000”). Note the segregation of “Epileptics” outside of the city on a “Farm,” an articulation of Howard’s underlying eugenics and social regeneration concerns. De/Ho/F1/1, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

Unpacking *To-Morrow*

Howard’s published vision of a utopian, healthy, yet practical planned community emerged during a period in which observers utilized utopian novels and

narratives to express their experience of, borrowing scholar Phillip Wegner's words, 'a modernity...in the midst of a thoroughgoing transformation.'¹⁷⁵ From *To-morrow*'s first pages, Howard positioned the book as a response to the twin social crises of his modernity: urban overcrowding and the depopulation of agricultural districts in Britain. "[I]t is deeply to be deplored," he wrote, "that the people should continue to stream into the already over-crowded cities, and should thus further deplete the country districts." This crisis of health, urban overcrowding, rural depopulation and a shortage of affordable housing was well understood by Anglo social reformers of this period, with men such as Samuel Barnett writing of the "dangerous" state of the "dull, hopeless, shiftless, and sad" urban poor and unemployed alongside the proliferation of uncultivated land.¹⁷⁶ Elsewhere in Europe, especially in Germany, the processes of unchecked industrialization and urbanization led to a shortage of decent housing for the working class, and similar crises of urban overcrowding and unsanitary conditions.¹⁷⁷ The adverse effects of industrial capitalism on urban environments and living conditions spurred Victorian demands for biopolitical control and regulation of cities and working class housing. By the end of the nineteenth-century, the issue of reforming urban housing dramatically shifted from, to use American planner Catherine Bauer's words, a "simple latter matter" for "philanthropic tenements" to "the problem of providing a decent living environment

¹⁷⁵ Phillip E. Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, The Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), xvi.

¹⁷⁶ Samuel A. Barnett, "A Scheme for the Unemployed," in *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, ed. James Knowles (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., 1888), 753-63; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Friedrich Engels, "The Housing Question," Marxist Internet Archive, 1872, accessed 2 September 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1872/housing-question/>; David Matthews, "The Struggle for Shelter: Class Conflict and Public Housing in Britain," *Monthly Review* 4 (2017): 43.

for everybody.”¹⁷⁸ Middle and upper class British women, as well, were deeply involved in this Victorian reformist impulse, and were in many ways more active than men in, as scholar Ellen Ross explains, the “service and the regulation of the poor.”¹⁷⁹ For Howard specifically, the significance of urban overcrowding and rural depopulation—the “universally agreed” social crisis facing turn of the century Britain—rested on their biological and social consequences: the deleterious effects of living in squalid, overcrowded spaces on the bodily constitution of the nation’s working class and the decline of bucolic spaces he believed ideal for healthy British living.¹⁸⁰

Historians have linked the emergence of English residual nostalgia for countryside spaces with the arrival of Britain as an urban industrial nation. As Michael Bunce explains, “the idealisation of the countryside was an inevitable consequence of the urban-industrial revolution” and a conjuncture of systematic economic transformation and disruption of the nation’s social, political, and cultural fabric.¹⁸¹ This urban-industrial revolution profoundly impacted forms and spaces of English living—by end of the nineteenth-century, Britain moved from having only two cities with over 50,000 inhabitants just a century previous, to over thirty industrial cities with a population of over 100,000. Within this spatial-economic transformation emerged a modern form of pastoral nostalgia constitutive of the emergence modern urban-industrial order. This modern idealization of country life

¹⁷⁸ Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), 106-107.

¹⁷⁹ Ellen Ross, *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 3-4.

¹⁸⁰ Howard, *To-morrow*, 1-11.

¹⁸¹ Michael Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 8-11. See also Williams, *The Country and the City*.

arrived not simply as a reaction to the impact of the urban-industrial revolution, but was itself nurtured by the social and spatial relations established by the emergent industrial mode of production. Howard's *To-morrow*, situating its premise on the assumption of the deleterious effects of unchecked urbanization and industrialization, became one of many attempts, particularly by the middle and upper classes, to make sense of the seeming breakdown of a traditional agricultural social order and the rise of an industrial political economy dependent upon the transfer of the working class to factories and urban districts.¹⁸²

To stress the universality of the crisis—that “all parties” agreed that they needed to stop the flow of agricultural laborers into overcrowded urban districts for the health of imperial Britain—Howard showcased quotes on the issue from various British noblemen, government, trade union and religious leaders, and liberal and conservative newspapers. The quotes invoked imagery of a declining national “body” trapped in a context of unchecked, overcrowded urban squalor, reflecting bourgeois anxieties over the loss of virtuous agricultural labor and picturesque country villages and landscape and imperialist concerns of the social and physical deterioration of the British race in the “awfulness” of London and the major industrial centers. This was perhaps best exemplified by a quote from Church of England cleric Dean Farrar, who professed the “great cities” of the nation would become “the graves of the physique of our race” with their “foul” houses and “squalid,” “ill-drained” and neglected

¹⁸² Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969); Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*. British sport historians have linked the emergence of urban industrial capitalism to the restructuring and organizing of physical cultural and recreational practices into modern sports, many of which entailed distinct ideals of country spaces. See Tony Collins, *Sport in Capitalist Society: A Short History* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

conditions. Howard's direct concern was the state of British living spaces and the need to reform the places where the working classes presently resided. By linking housing with health and certain spaces to certain levels of health, Howard's central question of "how to restore the people to the land" was, at its ideational core, a question of how to restore the people's *bodies* to a state of pastoral living, his perception of what constituted a socially and physically ideal space for the people's health.¹⁸³

The book emphasized the "natural healthfulness" of an idyllic, feminized construction of English countryside, and did not necessarily document the actual degradation and poverty of nineteenth century rural housing and villages. As scholar Karen Sayer argues, the "real" housing of the rural working class was "less desirable than the 'Ideal'" articulated by middle class reformers like Howard. Depending on the region, working class "cottages" were most often dilapidated dwellings, with poor families overcrowded into adapted farm buildings and shoddy properties controlled by speculators. As Howard rightly asserted, many rural working class dwellings were cold, damp, unsanitary, and with poor drainage conditions. The deteriorating state of rural poor included unequal access to fresh food, as most of the locally grown produce was shipped to the markets of nearby, larger industrial cities, forcing rural laborers to purchase produce in the city if they did not have their own personal or family garden. The descriptions of rural life *To-morrow*, however, emblemized the politicized discourse and perspective of the urban middle class, who saw the English countryside as both spaces idyllic, healthful English life and spaces urban laborers

¹⁸³ Howard, *To-morrow*, 1-11.

deserted for modern industrial work. Though Howard did reference rural degradation in his description of the “twin crisis” of Late Victorian England, his overall focus and concern was in repopulating rural districts—the British imperialist objective of returning the British people “back to the land”—and thereby regenerating the urban working class by resettling them on planned, modernized, yet pastoral communities.¹⁸⁴

Howard’s understanding and response to the twin crises rested on two interrelated, politicized conceptions of embodiment: “degenerating” working class bodies due to their suffering in overcrowded industrial cities, and “spiritual” bodies if they could be returned to their healthy, bucolic unity Nature, a middle class vision of unspoiled, feminized countryside (“the symbol of God’s love and care for man”). Howard explained this through his dialectical concept of the “Town-Country Magnet.” The problem, he wrote, stemmed from the absence of communities that united the benefits of both city and country life. The benefits of the overcrowded cities, Howard surmised, lied in their “attractions”: higher wages, more employment opportunities, and “prospects for advancement,” along with social and leisure activities afforded by the density of population, wealth and culture. While these “attractions” would be necessary for any effective urban housing reform, the unhealthy consequences of urbanity outweighed the benefits, with city dwellers forced to endure issues such a lack of access to Nature, “foul air, murky sky,” the

¹⁸⁴ Sayer, *Country Cottages*, 1-18; Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History, 1850-1925* (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991); Mick Reed and Roger Wells, eds., *Class, Conflict and Protest in the English Countryside, 1700-1880* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in Victorian England from 1880 to 1914* (London: Quartet Books, 1914); Howard, *To-morrow*, 1-11.

isolation of crowded living, and “slums and gin palaces.”¹⁸⁵ Howard’s explication of the simultaneous cultural opportunities and deleterious conditions of urban life was rooted in the longstanding anxieties of the English bourgeoisie and middle class concerns linking the overcrowding of space with conceptions of morality, decency, and comfort.¹⁸⁶ Framing the question of working class city life in terms of unhealthiness and lack of access to natural, green spaces, *To-morrow* reiterated late Victorian concerns that unhealthy urban conditions would have a degenerating effect on the British poor and working class. To the middle classes of late nineteenth-century Britain, urban poverty was, to use historian Gertrude Himmelfarb’s phrase, a “cultural condition” as much as an economic result. In this sense, middle class urban reformers constructed their class identity through cultural and imagined representations of the negative state of the urban poor.¹⁸⁷ The “degenerating” urban bodies to which Howard inferred, thus, was a middle class cultural reproduction of Victorian anxieties that lack of open space and fresh air would deteriorate working class bodies and thus undermine Britain as a race and imperial power.¹⁸⁸ Much in the

¹⁸⁵ The benefits and unhealthy aspects of town life were listed in Howard’s “The Three Magnets” diagram on the inside of the book’s cover. See Howard, *To-morrow*, 5-13.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 26-7; Anthony S. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum: Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977).

¹⁸⁷ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985); Dan Bivona and Roger B. Henkle, *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁸⁸ Peter Thorsheim, “Green Space and Class in Imperial London,” in *The Nature of Cities*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 24-37; In 1866, British physician John Edward Morgan observed “an increasing tendency on the part of the laboring classes to mass together, and either to form new centres of industry or to swell the population of those already existing.” He argued that the working class had an endemic “want of stamina,” with working class men lacking “that calibre from which we might expect either vigorous and healthy offspring, or arduous and sustained labour.” Like Howard, Morgan’s concern was in the effects of overcrowding and the need to return laborers to the social and biological fruits of bucolic spaces. As Morgan’s book explains, however, this was a late nineteenth-century discourse linked to questions of race, imperialism, and eugenics. See

vein of these late Victorian concerns, Howard's *To-morrow* alleged that the working class needed to be repopulated in communities where fresh air, sunlight, and open space could be guaranteed, and the biological and moral health of laborers could be restored.

In his solution for reforming urban working class housing, Howard presented the state of the nineteenth-century city in unnatural terms: as the outgrowth of modern industrial life that needed to be equalized with natural spaces in order to improve “the standard of health and comfort of all true workers of whatever grade...”¹⁸⁹ This sharp distinguishing between urban and rural life reproduced what scholars Grace Harrison and Ben Clifford calls “[t]he notion of a distinct divide between the ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ spheres” that is “woven into the fabric of English society.”¹⁹⁰ This was a dialectical construction—as Fredric Jameson argues, constructions of human nature are “hostages” to the mode of production—with Howard’s depiction of the state of urban life shaped by its purported relation to countryside, as well as the profound social changes affecting everyday Victorian life.¹⁹¹ As Lears writes, for the Anglo-American bourgeoisie the nineteenth-century city was “an emblem of modern unreality,” a built environment so adrift in cultural eclecticism and bereft of “familiar architectural and decorative forms” that observers found it “somehow artificial and

John Edward Morgan, *The Danger of Deterioration of Race From the Too Rapid Increase of Great Cities* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866).

¹⁸⁹ Howard, *To-morrow*, 3-4. For a good history of the politics of urban change in the development of Metropolitan London, see Ken Young and Patricia L. Garside, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change, 1837-1981* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982).

¹⁹⁰ Grace Harrison and Ben Clifford, “‘The field of grain is gone; It’s now a Tesco Superstore’: Representations of ‘Urban’ and ‘Rural’ within Historical and Contemporary Discourses Opposing Urban Expansion in England,” *Planning Perspectives* 31 (2016): 585-609.

¹⁹¹ For an explication of this dialectical relation between understandings of city and country life, see Williams, *The Country and the City*; Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2007); Shea, “‘Abortions of the Market,’” 153.

unreal.”¹⁹² The nineteenth century industrial city, a dramatic transformation of the visual environment birthed in the social turmoil of the period, became the spatial and social antithesis upon which upper class observers and reformers, such as Ebenezer Howard, sought to reinvigorate the English countryside as a paragon of ideal, naturally healthy environment.

Howard’s conception of the city as the unnatural antithesis to the country was a mobilization of Victorian concerns of the state urban poverty and housing.¹⁹³ Some previous garden city historians argue that Howard “hated the cities of [his] time with an overwhelming passion,” disgusted at the condition and growth of the large industrial cities. As Jane Jacobs later wrote, Howard’s “prescription for saving the people was to do the city in.” Yet while *To-morrow* was undeniably a detestation of the deleterious state of urban housing and everyday life, Howard also held an enthusiasm for urban life, being drawn to its “very confusion and disorder.”¹⁹⁴ This was a paradoxical depiction of the working class urban environment in which Anglo, middle class identity co-opted the culture of the city while denigrating the working class in terms of unhealthiness and degeneration.¹⁹⁵ Thus, middle class reformers

¹⁹² T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 32-3. See also Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 10. For sources on the history of the Victorian city, see James Winter, *Secure from Rash Assault: Sustaining the Victorian Environment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Judith Flanders, *The Victorian City: Everyday Life in Dicken’s London* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2014).

¹⁹³ Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 13-6.

¹⁹⁴ Kargon and Molella, *Invented Edens*, 7; Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 12; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 7-8; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 17.

¹⁹⁵ For sources on the history of the paradoxical construction of modern Western identities through perceptions of an “other,” see Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

such as Howard described the Victorian industrial city with imagery of some state of environmental “impurity” and artificiality, while simultaneously lauding the middle and upper class fruits of modern urban culture.¹⁹⁶ He wrote of the “alluring” social and cultural opportunities of the city, “amusements” such as theaters, concert halls, lectures, alluding to middle class cultural institutions whose value is lost by the polluted urban conditions.¹⁹⁷ From Howard’s perspective, the Victorian city was simultaneously a site cultural flowering, and an unhealthy state of existence whose overcrowded, vitiated spaces threatened the survival of middle class culture and British civilization.

The solution he articulated in *To-morrow* centered on the creation of material “Town-Country Magnets,” a term he used interchangeably with “Garden City” to signify bringing together the positives of city life with those of the countryside within a planned, ideal community. The Magnets would be designed to provide the employment and wage opportunities, leisure pursuits, and cultural activities he associated with urban life, but structured within a small scale model town and in concert with access to adjacent, traditional agrarian spaces. Within Howard’s explication of the “Town-Country Magnet,” however, he assumed that cities had an inherently unhealthy and unnatural quality despite its positive cultural attributes. This reflected a nineteenth-century British context in which many middle and upper class people increasingly believed in the detrimental effect city life had on people’s health

¹⁹⁶ This is an allusion to anthropologist Mary Douglas’ famous study of symbols and understandings of what is considered “pure” and “dirty” in modern and primitive societies. See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

¹⁹⁷ Howard, *To-morrow*, 8.

and biology due to, using historian Peter Thorsheim's words, "rather insufficient amounts of pure air, sunlight, and exercise."¹⁹⁸ Unlike environmental historians Sara Pritchard and Thomas Zeller's rethinking of historical processes such as industrialization "as natural as other large-scale transformations in human history," the city of Howard's *To-morrow* is the unnatural, unhealthy antithesis to pristine British countryside: the epitome of the corruption of modern life, a culturally constructed perception of urban space that middle and upper class reformers like Howard believed needed to be harmonized through community planning to ensure working class health.¹⁹⁹ The growth of the modern city resulted in the "closing out of Nature," and pastoral spaces needed to be restored next to a controlled version of city life to complete the "full plan and purpose of nature."²⁰⁰

Seen this way, Howard's "Town-Country Magnet" reflected the concerns of the Victorian middle and upper class that there was an unhealthy lack of green and open spaces, and thus access to their cultural constructions of "Nature," in London and other industrial cities. It emerged by a Victorian period in which the Anglo-American middle-classes sought a paternalist control over the dramatic transformation of Western society and its built spaces.²⁰¹ Public health reformers such as Sir Edwin Chadwick had long argued for increasing the amount of open

¹⁹⁸ Thorsheim, "The Corpse in the Garden," 49-50.

¹⁹⁹ Pritchard and Zeller, "The Nature of Industrialization," 69-70.

²⁰⁰ Howard, *To-morrow*, 9.

²⁰¹ See John Henry Hepp IV, *The Middle-Class City: Transforming Space and Time in Philadelphia, 1876-1926* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). Hepp's book was in part a critique of Robert Wiebe's influential book *The Search for Order*, which argued that progressive era reforms by the American middle-class stemmed from their "reaction" to the social instability brought by widespread immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. See Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980).

spaces and parks in cities such as London for the purposes of disciplined public recreation and spaces for proper exercise. This included suggesting the conversion of London cemeteries and burial grounds into playgrounds and parks, with public health reformers arguing for returning the burial of dead bodies to their perceived naturally healthy interaction with the earth.²⁰² Such discussions for more green spaces in cities reflected not only public health concerns but were bio-political strategies of social reformers reproducing desires enhance the image of British imperial power through urban beautification projects and bourgeois anxieties that the bodies of urban poor were becoming increasing undisciplined, weak, and uncivilized by living in inherently unhealthy cities.²⁰³ This context fed into Howard's argument that "[T]own and country must be married" within a single community; though at the surface *Town and Country* appeared to address capitalism's division between town and country, Howard's understood the "metabolism" between nature and society in middle class terms. His idea lied not in rethinking the late Victorian city's relation to nature, highlight the actual interactions between the two culturally-created polarities, but in merging a predominant Victorian understanding of the city with agricultural spaces espoused as naturally healthy by social reformers, eugenicists, and proponents of British imperialism alike.²⁰⁴ Thus, the Town-Country Magnets, in Howard's

²⁰² Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain: A Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns, Made at the Request of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department* (London: HMSO, 1843); Benjamin Ward Richardson, *The Health of Nations: A Review of the Works of Edwin Chadwick. With a Biographical Dissertation*. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1887).

²⁰³ Thorsheim, "The Corpse in the Garden," 38-9; Thorsheim, "Green Space and Class in Imperial London," 31-3; see J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

²⁰⁴ See Joel Tarr's conception of "metabolism" in his chapter "The Metabolism of the Industrial City: The Case of Pittsburgh," in *City, Country, Empire: Landscapes in Environmental History*, eds. Jeffrey M. Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey, eds. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 15-37; in

depiction, would be constructed according to the aesthetic values of middle-class Victorian society: 120 feet-wide “grand boulevards” connecting outer lying residential areas to the circular town center, a large enclosed “Crystal Palace” within central space where shopping/trade would occur surrounded by prescribed green space for recreation, a lecture and concert hall, library, museum, theatre, hospital, and “picture-gallery” congregated around the “Crystal Palace,” and various “philanthropic institutions” dotted along the periphery and supported by the “public-spirited people” of the garden city.²⁰⁵ The “Town-Country Magnet” would have the institutions, values, and spaces revered by middle and upper class reformers, but also the adjacent agricultural, green, and open spaces they believed would be necessary to improve the social and physical health of degenerating urban laborers.

If the city of *To-morrow* symbolized the possibilities of more work, higher wages, cultural “attractions” as well as an unhealthy “closing out” of natural environment, the “countryside” was the spatialization of a Victorian imagining of an uncorrupted, virgin “Nature”. Carolyn Merchant writes, “Nature...and civilization are socially constructed concepts that change over time,” expanding from historian William Cronon’s influential assertion that nature “is a profoundly human construction.”²⁰⁶ For late Victorian social reformers like Howard “Nature” signified a feminized Garden of Eden, beautiful in its virgin natural state and evoking biblical imagery, yet vulnerable to the onslaught of a masculinized industrial capitalism. He

using it to empirically study the interactions between cities and surrounding natural environment, Tarr’s concept can be seen in part as the incorporation of Marx’s concept of “metabolic rift” within historical analysis. See Foster, *Marx’s Ecology*.

²⁰⁵ Howard, *To-morrow*, 14-8.

²⁰⁶ Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*, 143; Cronon, “Introduction,” 25.

wrote that “[t]he country magnet declares herself to be the source of all beauty and wealth,” the necessary complement to masculine modern society: “As man and woman by their varied gifts and faculties supplement each other, so should town and country.” The power of town life, however, meant a vulnerable countryside lacking in the necessary cultural, capitalistic activities: “the Town magnet mockingly reminds her that she is very dull for lack of society, and very sparing of her gifts for lack of capital.”²⁰⁷ By arguing for the marriage of the two spheres of life within one Town-Country Magnet, Howard’s reproduced a nineteenth-century Western narratives of recovering Eden: European and American discourses of a gendered, “fallen nature to be redeemed through reclamation,” serving to reinforce predominant upper class ideologies of British civilization and pastoral living.²⁰⁸ By marrying town and country life, Howard’s garden city offered a built environment form that could seemingly pacify upper class fears of “overcivilization” and working class degeneration while reproducing predominant British constructions and narratives of ideal natural spaces such as the country.

Yet, Howard imagined that residents would come to reap the healthful benefits of the countryside not just through their mere presence near such spaces, but from the opportunities for healthier forms of labor. First, as he outlined the economic benefits of the garden city’s agricultural belt, Howard underscored the importance of town as an adjacent local market for farmers on the belt to sell their produce. “Every farmer now has a market close to his doors.” The presence of the town near

²⁰⁷ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 7-9.

²⁰⁸ Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*, 117, 142-3.

preserved agricultural land would allow farmers to grow crops they otherwise would not grow, such as fruits and vegetables, because the garden city, as a local market, would eliminate expensive freight costs and free the farmers from the demands from agricultural and urban “middlemen” and “speculators.” Moreover, the modernized sewage utilities provided by the presence of the garden city would allow for “maximum cultivation.”²⁰⁹ Consistently, Howard articulated what he imagined would be a direct relation between the garden city bodies and the surrounding environment by espousing the benefits of a new community of people and culture on enhancing the available and efficiency of local agriculture. The garden city would not only modernize the countryside through technologies such as sewage facilities, but would increase the efficiency and profitability of the farmer’s work and cultivation of the soil. This was a residual cultural idea that fed into dominant capitalist social relations at the time, as Howard worked throughout book to persuasively showcase the revenue generating potential of the reformist venture.²¹⁰ Seen this way, pastoral labor served as a key prescribed, residual form of physical culture in Howard’s garden city manifesto, not only to inculcate healthier bodies through their work and bodily relation to the elements of the countryside, but to maintain their efficiency and profitability as laboring bodies within a capitalist national economy.

Second, Howard imagined the presence of the countryside and the healthful attributes of rural living—“fresh air,” “ample sunlight”—would allow for healthier,

²⁰⁹ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 24-27.

²¹⁰ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 20-50.

more productive industrial workers, aligning his community model with the dominant cultural values of the capitalist mode. He wrote that the garden city would constitute for Britain a “higher and better form of industrial life” because each community, with its surrounding agrarian landscape and modern, carefully planned town, would attract industrialists and workers alike: from “manufacturers” to trade unionists, from merchants and the professional classes to the “very simplest forms of unskilled labor...” Howard made no attempt to hide that one of the primary issues of his garden city would be “how capital may be attracted and wealth created,” and spoke of the “healthful surroundings” of the countryside as also economically beneficial by producing healthier, more content workers who would appreciate the available “regular employment” in the garden city. Howard applied the community’s benefits to “manufacturers” and “workers” alike, so that when he wrote that each garden city would “offer a means of securing new and better employment for their capital and talents,” he was speaking to industrialist as well as the poor urban worker.²¹¹ For Howard, labor connected each dimension of the garden city. The creation of “healthy homes” and their location in “healthy surroundings” that would come from the “re-modelling of every city in the land and the building of many new garden cities” would be “a vast field of work for the adult population.” The prescription and improvement of labor, its re-established relation with the countryside, and its improved relation to the owners of capital, was the pivot upon Howard’s definition of a “healthy” garden city rested.²¹²

²¹¹ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 10, 13, 128, 140.

²¹² Typescript of lecture entitled 'Remedies for Unemployment', Read at Co-operative Society's meeting at Liberty Hall, Kimphorpe, Northamptonshire. Date possibly 1916, Dec 13, 1910, DE/Ho/F10/20, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

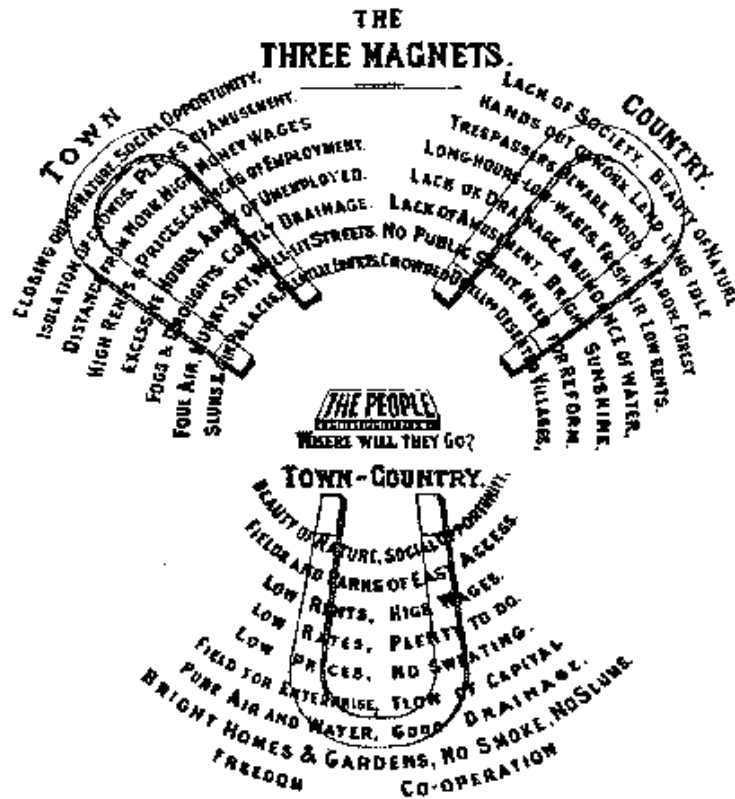


Figure 2.2 – Ebenezer Howard’s “Town-Country Magnet” as used in his 1898 garden city treatise *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Image taken from Wikimedia Commons. See Howard, *To-Morrow*.

Spiritualist Biological Essentialism

When Howard articulated the meaning of the countryside in *To-Morrow*, his words were couched in not only cultural, but spiritual meaning. We should not bypass Howard’s use of spiritual, religious imagery in his notion of nature. In many ways the recovery of Eden narrative Howard articulated through his garden city ideal was not only built upon spiritual and cultural constructions of nature and health—serving to mutually reproduce the other’s embedded conceptions of the ideal, healthy body—but reflected a spiritualist romanticism for pastoral and agricultural commune labor. Using “Nature” and countryside interchangeably in his book, Howard wrote in

To-Morrow that the countryside represented “God’s love,” the “source of all health, all wealth, all knowledge,” a more natural space through which British urban workers would become more civilized, lifted to a “new hope, a new life, a new civilization.”²¹³ He interwove his spiritual beliefs within his depictions of countryside and how its naturally healthy attribute would flow into worker residents through their laboring and leisurely interactions, to the point of even considering naming his community model “New Jerusalem” (he later renamed it “Garden City” to attract upper class, industrialist support and downplay his communitarian impulses).²¹⁴ Though contemporary British agrarian life lacked the modern sanitary technology necessary to preserve “the natural healthfulness of the country,” by returning the British working class to such bucolic spaces, they surely would regenerate via the “the bright sunshine and the pure air” and the interaction with “Nature” that such spaces entailed. The countryside, was for Howard, the biological and spiritual source of ideal, naturally health and embodied living, in part because pure nature was inseparable from healthy human nature: “Our bodies are formed of it,” He wrote, “to it they return.”²¹⁵

Let us first understand that Howard’s spiritualization of the body and natural health, and his relating idealized country spaces to biological and social health, reflected a devotion of nineteenth-century spiritualist doctrine. As a stenographer in 1870s Chicago, Howard endured a personal crises as he read Charles Darwin’s recently published *Descent of Man* and W.H. Draper’s *Intellectual History of Europe*.

²¹³ Howard, *To-morrow*, 9-10.

²¹⁴ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 4.

²¹⁵ Howard, *To-morrow*, 9, 125.

The crisis, historian Stanley Buder argues, revolved around how to reconcile the advancements of evolutionary science with his Christian beliefs. Howard's crisis reflected a late nineteenth-century American context in which, as Michael Kammen explains, "the pervasive force of religion declined" in rise of Darwinian evolution, precipitating a tension "between doubt and faith" that "would increasingly be resolved in favor of the former."²¹⁶ Howard reconciled his crisis of faith and science via the doctrine of spiritualist leader Cora Lavinia Scott Hatch Daniels Tappen Richmond, Howard having witnessed one of her trance medium lectures while contracted to transcribe the event for a Chicago newspaper. Nineteenth-century spiritualists purported themselves to be mediums with a spirit world, capable of having, in the words of historian Logie Barrow, "conversations with the 'spirits' of physically dead people." Cora Richmond's "Modern Spiritualism," specifically, relied on public performances of speaking to the spirits as a trance medium, preaching abstruse principles of human-cosmic unity while scorning the corrupt, overt materialism and selfishness of modern urban civilization. This appealed to a middle and upper class anxieties of the apparent corruption and decline of the urban environment, and gelled with Euro-American constructions of nature as "another world" separate from their experience of modernity and also rife with cultural and spiritual qualities.²¹⁷ As historian Janet Oppenheim explains, despite their use of arcane and occult beliefs in the existence of souls distinct from the material world, spiritualist concerns with the state of nineteenth-century society placed them

²¹⁶ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 194-5.

²¹⁷ Susan G. Davis, "Touch the Magic," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 211-2.

“squarely amidst the cultural, intellectual, and emotional moods of the era,” a belief system that was in large part a response to shifting social and cultural concerns of urban health.²¹⁸

In Richmond’s spiritualism, Ebenezer Howard found a belief system emphasizing the power of the individual soul and the human potential in becoming unified with cosmic and godly forces and altruistically work to create a higher order of civilization. This was dependent, however, upon believing that people were healthier and more virtuous prior to the corruption of the nineteenth-century and its concomitant urban industrial capitalism, and could be re-established with more “natural” spaces of life. Paralleling New England transcendentalism, spiritualist doctrine called for the return of the virtues of the early American republic they thought existed prior to the explosion of nineteenth-century capitalism materialism through processes of industrialization and urbanization. If people could live cooperatively and in harmony with nature in smaller communitarian locales, they could achieve a higher stage of civilization and reform the unhealthy and overcrowded state of the nineteenth-century industrial city.²¹⁹ Though imbued with arcane discussions of cosmic and spirit forces, Richmond’s spiritualist doctrine bounded the human body to the existence of souls and “God,” the body being the

²¹⁸ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 8-13; Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebeians, 1850-1910* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 1; Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4; Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1969), 143; see also Frank Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism: A History and a Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1902); “Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life,” *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1878, accessed 23 June 2017, retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1878/10/certain-dangerous-tendencies-in-american-life/376162/>.

²¹⁹ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 8-13; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 13-6; Barrow, *Independent Spirits*.

material vessel to improve towards forming a cosmic unity between spirits and earthly existence. In this sense the spiritualist conception of the body was an imagining of man's pre-existing, natural unity with "God" prior to the corruption of nineteenth-century urban materialism. In her abstrusely-written 1887 book on Modern Spiritualism, Richmond wrote that the human body was "[t]he expression of the Soul in the personal human form," inferring an inherent unity between bodily existence and spiritualism's idealization of nature as indissoluble from God.²²⁰

It should be of little surprise, then, that such spiritualist doctrine advocated agricultural labor as a primary mode of active embodied for re-establishing a healthier and spiritually transcendent relation with God. Historian Robert Cox relates the rise of nineteenth-century spiritualism to questions of emotion and embodied sympathy, arguing that spiritualist doctrine situated the body as the material nexus of a desire to obliterate presumed "boundaries of belief, party, and sect, and even of time and space" in the pursuit of transcending the present context of social turmoil and corrupt urban civilization.²²¹ The body of Richmond's spiritualist doctrine was rooted in a conception of human nature that historian Christine Ferguson calls a "deterministic model of subjectivity," through which physical difference and human potential were understood as biologically determined and linked to natural heredity and eugenic concerns. The spiritualist "organic unity" between the afterlife and social progress, as a result, problematically reinforced racial and gender hierarchies and traditional notions of masculine labor. Spiritualist communes were established where acolytes

²²⁰ Cora L.V. Richmond, *The Soul: Its Nature, Relations, and Expressions in Human Embodiments* (Chicago: The Spiritual Publishing Co., 1887).

²²¹ Robert S. Cox, *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 98-100, 190-2.

engaged in farming and agricultural pursuits. Women were relegated to the role of spiritual medium to their supposed natural meekness. Spiritualists saw non-urban spaces as more spiritually evocative, and spoke of the wisdom of “spirit Indians” due to white notions of American Indian primitiveness and concomitant spiritual superiority.²²² Ironically, spiritualism did offer women a public space of empowerment as mediums during popular trance events in cities, and often paralleled nineteenth-century campaigns for women’s rights by arguing that women were “naturally healthy” prior to the corruption of civilization and should be liberated from restrictions with fashion, diet and exercise.²²³ The idealized, healthy body of spiritualist doctrine, however, was a corporeal linking of evolutionary theory and racial ideologies with the occult and the romanticizing of the pastoral: the biological amelioration of modernity with eugenic desires for racial perfection and the reinforcement of the woman’s position in the gender hierarchy.²²⁴

The biodeterminism of spiritualist doctrine gelled with Howard’s close engagement with the positivism of British theorist Herbert Spencer. Analyzing Spencer’s book *Social Statics*, Howard studied the practicality of his explication of an evolved, ordered, progressive society under moral law, with modern capitalist

²²² Christine Ferguson, *Determined Spirits: Eugenics, Heredity and Racial Regeneration in Anglo-American Spiritualist Writing, 1848-1930* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 1-5; Marlene Tromp, review of *Determined Spirits: Eugenics, Heredity and Racial Regeneration in Anglo-American Spiritualist Writing, 1848-1930*, by Christine Ferguson, *Victorian Studies*, Winter 2015, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/585767>; Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 55-56.

²²³ Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 142-4; see also Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

²²⁴ Ferguson, *Determined Spirits*; Roger Luckhurst, “Religion, Psychical Research, Spiritualism, and the Occult,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, eds. Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gasiorek, Deborah Longworth, and Andrew Thacker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 429-44.

societies as models of civilized harmony.²²⁵ Rather than offering a metaphysical contradiction, this form of evolutionary positivism buttressed Howard's spiritualist beliefs: as Lears explains, Spencer's doctrine substituted Providence with "an Unknowable power," with both maintaining their doctrine of inevitable evolutionary process governing the state of society.²²⁶ From Richmond's spiritualism, Buder explains, Howard "believed he had acquired knowledge of the God-given harmonious order of the universe," and as a result "the road...humanity must travel to reach the higher civilization promised by grand design."²²⁷ In Spencer's *Social Statics*, Howard believed he found a practical measure by which equality and the proper ordering of society could be achieved by scientific understanding, with the prescription of particular physical cultural forms a central component. Put together, Howard arrived at an approach to reforming society that offered the linking of moral and material progress, allowing for, say, a modern urban and housing reform scheme to simultaneously reinforce determinist moral values. Thus, in his writings Howard couched ideas for modern housing, urban sanitation and reform in religious metaphors and imagery of a strengthened, disciplined population of citizens, seeing future garden cities as "training grounds" for "a body of able and experienced lieutenants" to carry out the Supreme Doer's goals.²²⁸ Social progress became "the outcome of spiritual forces pushing outward through the hearts and minds of men into

²²⁵ Article concerning model communities including 'Hygeia', Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS. See Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics; or, The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed* (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1969).

²²⁶ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 20-2.

²²⁷ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 13.

²²⁸ Ward, "Ebenezer Howard," 14-7; Typescript of brief biographical notes, folder "Anecdotes by Ebenezer," Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

the social and industrial planes...expressing themselves in material forms,” and the garden city would express this social progress, imbuing the “grand” design with the racial and eugenic undercurrents of both spiritualism and Spencerian positivism. By linking notions of spiritualist and Spencerian evolutionary progress, Howard placed his garden city ideal within a biodeterminist framework, whereby the ideal garden city body became a cultural nexus fusing social evolution with moral progress, and resolving, via its biological improvement and maintenance, upper class concerns of urban degeneration and rural degradation.²²⁹

Arguably the clearest expression of spiritualist and Spencerian beliefs within *To-morrow* was Howard’s depiction of the Town-Country Magnet as a “Master Key.” He wrote that the marrying of town and country life within a single, healthy community would be:

the key to a portal through which, even when scarce ajar, will be seen to pour a flood of light on the problems of intemperance, of excessive toil, of restless anxiety, of grinding poverty—the true limits of Governmental interference, ay, and even the relations of man to the Supreme Power.

Social reform, bourgeois anxieties of urban degeneration, spiritual fulfillment, and pastoral activities intertwined within Howard’s “Master Key.” In its proper arrangement of social/cultural intercourse and open, green, and agricultural space, the garden city would be the “stepping-stone to a higher and better form of industrial life generally throughout the country,” echoing spiritualist beliefs in social reform as a vehicle for instilling a socially higher stage of civilization, and Spencerian notions of

²²⁹ Printed account of the address given by Ebenezer Howard on 'Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress', Given to the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London, April 14 (published Apr 30) 1910, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

evolutionary optimism. Residents would be able to escape the social, biological, and spiritual corruption of the modern city, and be returned to the bosom of the naturally healthy country by, at bottom, living in close proximity and possibly engaging in bucolic activities. Moreover, this fulfillment would only arrive via the creation of a proper Town-Country Magnet, for only in such conditions would the natural health of the country “reveal” itself in harmony with the culturally attributes of the town. In short, Howard believed his garden city model would be a “Master Key” because it preserved the only possible spaces and imposed the embodied living forms through which spiritual, social, and physical fulfillment was possible—the bucolic spaces of “Merrie England”—all within a community model that could simultaneously retain the cultural pleasures and opportunities of the city.²³⁰

²³⁰ Howard, *To-morrow*, 5-11, 128-9; Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 416-53.

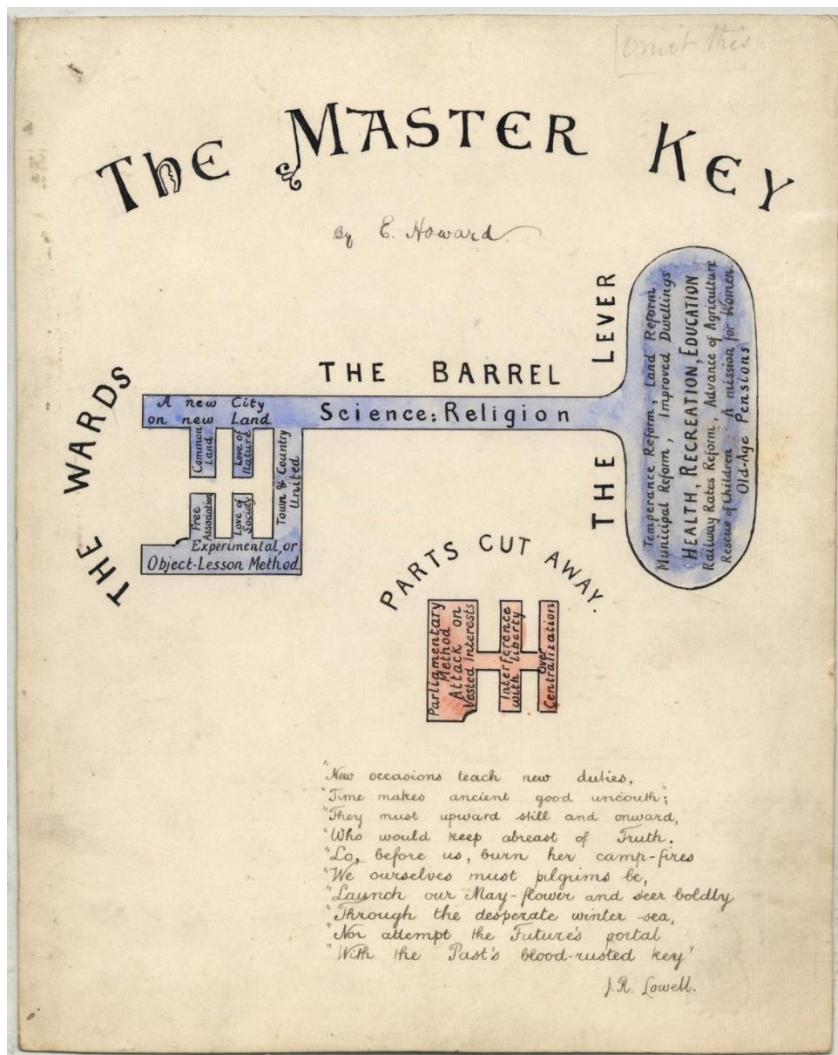


Figure 2.3 – Ebenezer Howard’s Diagram of 'The Master Key'. Note the location of “Science: Religion” as the “barrel” of the key, and “health” and “recreation” the “lever”. De/Ho/F1/14, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

John Ruskin and English Pastoral Physical Culture

Howard’s underlying spiritualist and Spencerian values alone, however, do not explain why he believed his garden city would spatially provide a healthier living environment for the urban working class. Richmond’s doctrine may have helped Howard to see his reform as a “Master Key” unlocking a higher state of British civilization, but what led him to believe in the British countryside as the ideal

conception of “Nature” through which the urban working classes living healthier lives? Multiple garden city historians suggest the importance of Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson’s popular 1876 pamphlet *Hygeia: A City of Health* as a source that led Howard to link issues of public health with urban reform. This is most likely due to the survival of a manuscript by Howard on the plausibility of building a new city along hygienic guidelines recommended by Richardson and his mentor the social reformer Sir Edwin Chadwick. Howard argued that Richardson’s city of health—with its “perfect” sanitary conditions brought through modern technologies, “beautiful gardens,” and “broad spacious streets,” and embedded paternalist disdain for the “crude and selfish,” uncivilized “masses”—could become a material reality, for it appealed to the “imagination of common sense.” The difficulty of Richardson’s vision, in Howard’s mind, was not his depiction of workers, but that he did not specify how such a city could be financed.²³¹ Still, Richardson’s text, and Howard’s interpretation, largely concerned questions of the incorporation of sanitary science within a modern urban design: the practical steps needed to make a modern city more hygienic through radical changes such as subways, kitchen and sanitary technology, and the mandating of garden spaces for each dwelling.²³² Richardson, and subsequently Howard, linked health with garden space within an upper class reformer discourse on civilizing the working class. Yet, why did gardens and the British countryside symbolize the ideal spaces for British healthfulness?

²³¹ Benjamin Ward Richardson, *Hygeia: A City of Health* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1876), 8; Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*; Article concerning model communities including 'Hygeia', Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS; City of health and how to build it (nd, 1890-1891?), Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

²³² Richardson, *Hygeia*.

There is a clue to the underlying rationale of Howard's linking of health with gardens and countryside in his choice of quotations to adorn the topic of "Chapter I" in *To-morrow* and his revised edition retitled *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. Both quotations were taken from the writings of anti-modest social thinker and polemicist John Ruskin. For *To-morrow*, Howard chose a passage from Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, his condemnation of capitalist political economy and its effects on workers. The quote in *To-morrow*, though, linked scenes of "joyful human labour" with vivid imagery of the revitalizing gifts of the countryside:

No air is sweet that is silent; it is only sweet when full of low currents of undersound, triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects, and deep-toned words of men, and wayward trebles of childhood. As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary—the wild flower by the wayside as well as the tended corn, and the wild birds and creatures of the forest as well as the tended cattle...

These things were not just attributes of English bucolic splendor, Ruskin wrote: they were the "desert manna" wrought by the "unknowable work of God." One's natural, laborious interactions with the earth brought with it not only pleasure and health, but spiritual fulfillment.²³³ The quotation in *Garden Cities of To-morrow* expanded this articulation of the beauty of country and pastoral pleasures, elucidated a vision of a healthier city as one with grouped, "sanitary" houses adjacent to "open country" and gardens and orchards surrounding the envisioned city, so that "perfectly fresh air and grass and sight of far horizon" would all be within walking distance.²³⁴ Similar to

²³³ Howard, *To-morrow*, 12; John Ruskin, *Unto This Last* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1921), 124.

²³⁴ Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 20; John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lillies* (New York: Silver Burdett and Company, 1900); John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, Volume 17, eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), 111. For a good history of

nineteenth-century Anglo American authors from the era, this was a stark contrasting of imagined pastoral living with the transformations of industrialism: the “garden” as emblematic of a British pastoral past threatened by nineteenth-century political economy and the scourge of the industrial division of labor.²³⁵

The “joyful human labour” alluded to Ruskin’s understanding of a healthy body as epitomizing the physical and social constitution of the medieval craftsman, content with his social position due to the pleasure he obtained through his craftsmanship and natural, healthful interactions with the environment. The path to healthier, happier workingmen’s lives, Ruskin wrote in his famous volume on aesthetics and architecture *The Stones of Venice*, was a return to pre-industrial, medieval relation between human labor and nature: “it is only by [manual] labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impugny.”²³⁶ His perception of pre-industrial agrarian healthfulness seemed to at least superficially parallel Friedrich Engel’s portrait of workingman prior to “the introduction of machinery”: men led a “righteous and peaceful life,” engaging in “leisure for healthful work in garden or field...which, in itself, was recreation for them...”²³⁷ Both not only contrasted a healthier, pre-industrial English past with a physically deleterious industrial present, but formed

Ruskin and his thought, see John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin’s Genius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). For a good selection of Ruskin’s writings, see John Ruskin, *Selected Writings*, ed. Dinah Birch (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²³⁵ See Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 347.

²³⁶ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice: Volume I – The Foundations, Volume II – The Sea-Stories* (Boston: Aldine Book Publishing Co., 1890), 164-71; Shea, “Abortions of the Market,” 153; Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, 120-1.

²³⁷ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1887), 3; See also Friedrich Engels, “The Condition of the Working Class in England,” *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (2003): 1246-9.

their perception from an idea and depiction of, to use Raymond Williams' phrase, "the rural innocence of the pastoral": the rise of the industrial capitalist division of labor severed the workers' originating, healthful, embodied ties with countryside life.²³⁸

Yet while Engels' depiction of pre-industrial worker health was an integral component of his socialist politics and communist sympathies, Ruskin's anti-modern perspective linked upper class morality with fears of class conflict. Whereas Engels emphasized the healthful qualities of pre-industrial life as part of his overall assertion of the emergence of an urban, industrial proletariat, Ruskin's jeremiad of the loss medieval craftsmanship was part and parcel of a desire to remedy urban degeneration through paternalist measures for education and cultivating working class health and vigor.²³⁹ Articulated with a nineteenth-century Anglo-American cultural milieu of the upper class cop-opting of nature as a counterpoint industrial urban life, Ruskin lamented of the failings of the capitalism system in its ability to "manufacture everything" in the industrial cities "except men..." He argued that the industrial mode of production transformed the separation between the "noble" and the "poor" from what was "merely a wall built by law" to an intensified, violent separation, "a precipice between upper and lower grounds in the field of humanity, and there is pestilential air at the bottom of it." Rather than enflame this precipice through radical politics, He thought the poor needed to be rescued from the degradation of factory work through social reform, and shown that "[i]t is not that men are ill fed, but that

²³⁸ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 46.

²³⁹ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, 15-7; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 62-3.

they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread...”²⁴⁰ As a member of the Social Science Association—an organization linked to eugenic concerns of improving the moral and physical conditions of poor and studying the effects of poverty in terms of disease and degeneration—Ruskin’s calls for the need to “manufacture...men” flowed in tandem with a construction of ideal health as a form of medieval, pastoral labor necessary to regenerate the social and physical constitutions of the weakening urban working class.²⁴¹ This was, in short, a moralizing strategy to improve the state of workers without upsetting class relations and the positions of capital, a call for more “fatherly benevolence” from the country’s institutions.²⁴²

Ruskin merged a return to pastoral feudal labor arrangements with his social reform ideas, an important aspect for understanding the embodied dimensions of his thought. He established a charitable trust, the Guild of St. George, in order to “re-establish the peasant population of England under conditions which would ensure healthful and happy life.” The Guild was, as Graham MacDonald calls it, Ruskin’s “agricultural and educational experiment,” using upper class donations to acquire “freehold land” so that on such spaces could be trained “as many British children as can be, in healthy, brave, kindly life.”²⁴³ Ruskin’s emblem of health was the

²⁴⁰ See Jennifer Price, “Looking for Nature at the Mall: A Field Guide to the Nature Company,” in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 188-90; Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 164, 166

²⁴¹ Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14-5; Pauline Mazumdar, *Eugenics, Human Genetics, and Human Failings: The Eugenics Society, its Sources and Critics in Britain* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

²⁴² Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 62-3.

²⁴³ Guild of St. George pamphlet, Number 65, printed by Shepherd & Perkins, Bewdley, 1907, GB 133 Eng MS 1164 – Letters and Papers regarding the Guild of St. George, John Ruskin Papers, The John Rylands Library (hereafter referred to as TJRL), University of Manchester, Manchester, United

medieval laborer in agrarian, feudal social arrangements: indeed, Ruskin wrote in letters that “The old Feudal system applied to do good instead of evil – to save life instead of destroy,” and he hoped the Guild would bring about an alteration of English laws towards such returned pursuits and craftsmanship.²⁴⁴ Simple, manual, craftsmen labor with spaces reminiscent of pre-industrial was, for Ruskin, salubrious labor, capable of reforming the social and physical dangers of the industrial division of labor, without succumbing to class strife, if the nation’s youth could be educated in “training schools” in the mold of Ruskin’s Guild.²⁴⁵

While Howard framed his treatise as a response to the central question “how to restore the people to the land,” one does not encounter prose romanticizing medieval craftsmanship and labor.²⁴⁶ The influence of Ruskin’s thought on *To-morrow* lay in Howard’s assumptions as to the “pure delights of the country,” imbuing nature with a spiritual power and ability to revitalize; while for Ruskin the country was the “desert manna” imparted from God, for Howard such spaces constituted the “bosom” through which God expended the fruits of rural life.²⁴⁷ It was not necessarily that Howard imagined the health of the residents of his garden city to be dependent on their return to feudal labor pursuit and pre-industrial social

Kingdom; Mark Frost, *The Lost Companions and John Ruskin’s Guild of St. George: A Revisionist History* (New York: Anthem Press, 2014).

²⁴⁴ Graham A. MacDonald, “The Politics of the Golden River: Ruskin on Environment and the Stationary State,” *Environment and History* 18 (2012): 143; Graham A. MacDonald, “‘Discipline and Interference’: Ruskin’s Political Economy, Natural Law, and the Moral Disorder of Victorian England,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 20 (2015): 62-3.

²⁴⁵ Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, 15-8.

²⁴⁶ Arguably one of the clearest examples that Howard’s vision with in some way linked with understandings of medieval life was his assumptions about density in his Garden City model. He relied on traditional dimensions of the average property lot that were in use since the Middle Ages: 20 by 130 feet, a minimum 20 by 100 feet. See Hall, *Sociable Cities*, 22.

²⁴⁷ Howard, *To-morrow*, 10; Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 18.

and familial arrangements—he wrote that social arrangements would “the most healthy and vigorous where the freest and fullest opportunities are afforded alike for individual and for combined effort.”²⁴⁸ Rather, it was Howard’s linking of ideal health with agrarian spaces, and seeing rural labor activities as healthier pursuits than their urban industrial counterparts, that one can see the impact of Ruskin’s thought. The healthy bodies of *To-morrow* were not just spiritualized through the countryside: Howard believed their social and physical health would be intrinsically improved by the presumed pleasurable activities the Country Magnet would naturally afford working class residents. This vision of the embodied fruits of the countryside flowed from John Ruskin’s writings.

Many garden city histories introduce the ideas of Ruskin alongside those of the British socialist and polymath William Morris, whose politics and Arts and Crafts values came to profoundly impact the garden city movement through the work of Letchworth architects and planners Sir Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker.²⁴⁹ It is difficult to pinpoint Morris’ impact upon Howard’s writing, however, as he is not referenced in the pages of either *To-morrow* or *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. Indeed, the only reference to Morris I encountered in my researching of Howard’s surviving papers is a brief reference in a 1910 address on the “Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress,” in which Morris is mentioned, along with Ruskin, as one of the many previous thinkers who expressed the ideas that would ultimately become

²⁴⁸ Howard, *To-morrow*, 96.

²⁴⁹ Miller, *Letchworth*, 4-5; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 36-7; Hall and Ward, “Sociable Cities,” 12-4; Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, 421-2; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 17. Standish Meacham, interestingly, does not discuss the influence of Ruskin and Morris on the English garden city movement until he begins to discuss Unwin and Parker. See Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 70.

embedded within the activities and objectives of the garden city movement.²⁵⁰

Undoubtedly Morris' inveighing of industrial capitalism and his belief in the "due necessities" for "good citizens"—work that is "worth doing and pleasant to do," dwellings that are "well built, clean, and healthy," surroundings of "unspoilt" and agrarian countryside, and ample time for leisure and rest—in some way undergirded Howard's garden city vision, for the parallels are too striking, the cultural influences too intersecting, and the British context of radical ideas too interconnected.²⁵¹

Historian Mervyn Miller argues, however, that Howard's conception of the garden city in *To-morrow* was less a response to the "artistic and social implications" of Morris' socialist politics and the politics of the Arts and Crafts movement than an attempt to unveil the financial and planning practicality of his utopian ideal. The peak of Morris' influence upon the garden city movement would arguably flow from the work and ideas of acolyte Raymond Unwin, and would become visible in the architectural and organizational layout of Letchworth and its design effect upon people's health and embodiment.²⁵²

Embodying Cooperation

²⁵⁰ Printed account of the address given by Ebenezer Howard on 'Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress', Given to the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Royal Society of British Artists, April 14 (published Apr 30) 1910, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

²⁵¹ Miller, *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, 5; William Morris, "Art and Socialism," January 23, 1884, accessed July 11, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/as/as.htm>; See E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

²⁵² Mervyn Miller, "The Origins of the Garden City Residential Neighborhood," in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 102-4.

Garden city histories emphasize the influence of Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward* on Howard's increasing realization that an ideal community could be practically planned. According to historian John Kasson, the book, an international best-seller by the last decade of the nineteenth century, was one of over a hundred and fifty utopian and dystopian novels published in the 1880s and 1890s, as middle and upper class Americans attempted to comprehend the seemingly pervasive social discontent in the midst of technological transformation and the possible preservation of traditional, pre-industrial values within the emerging industrial order. The utopian novel became a "mode of social experience" for coming to terms with context's transforming conditions.²⁵³ It was through Bellamy and his novel of a future ideal, healthy, egalitarian, cooperative society that Howard "derived" his ideas; Bellamy "provoked" the future garden city inventor "to formulate his own proposals"; the book so "deeply influenced" Howard that he arranged for an English edition to be published.²⁵⁴ Garden city historians presumably base their underscoring of *Looking Backward's* importance not only on Howard's own surviving explanations, but in his own participation in the land nationalization movement inspired by Bellamy's ideas. Stanley Buder uncovered historical evidence listing an "E. Howard" as an executive board member of the Nationalisation of Labour Society," writing that the organization provided Howard with public platform to

²⁵³ John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York: Penguin, 1984), 189-91.

²⁵⁴ Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 28; Miller, *Letchworth*, 11-2; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 27-30; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 1, 52, 56; Schuyler, "introduction," 4-5; *The Daily Telegraph*, May 2, 1928; "Ebenezer Howard," *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, May 2, 1928.

speak on proposal for co-operative land colonies based on Bellamy's novel.²⁵⁵ Letchworth leader C.B. Purdom put it succinctly in his retrospective account of the community's planning: Howard "read Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and became a Utopian."²⁵⁶ Like many other leaders of social and political movements around the world during the period, the impulse and ideas *Looking Backward* profoundly impacted Howard and his development of what became his garden city ideal.²⁵⁷ More critically, the utopian narrative reinforced the construction and role of the "nation-state" within regressive visions of reformed living: the construction of a utopian community as linked to the construction of the nation as, in Phillip Wegner's words, "an original spatial, social, and cultural form."²⁵⁸

The scale of Bellamy's influence, however, becomes problematic when considering the embodied/experiential prescriptions detailed in *To-morrow*, particularly how would-be residents would live co-operatively and harmoniously. Howard wrote of his uncertainty of the "highly centralised and bureaucratically organised" nature of Bellamy's envisioned co-operative.²⁵⁹ Contrary to Howard's inclination to Ruskinian nostalgia for the forms of community and labor prior to industrialization, Bellamy's novel—in which a centralized state organized society and economy and guaranteed the health, leisure, and satisfaction of every citizen—

²⁵⁵ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 34-6; Schuyler, "Introduction," 5; Ward, "Ebenezer Howard," 19. See John Hope Franklin, "Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement," *The New England Quarterly* 11 (1938): 739-72; Everett W. MacNair, *Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement, 1889-1894* (Milwaukee: The Fitzgerald Company, 1957).

²⁵⁶ C.B. Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1963), 1.

²⁵⁷ Carl J. Guaneri, "An American Utopia and Its Global Audiences: Transnational Perspectives on *Looking Backward*," *Utopian Studies* 19 (2008): 147-87.

²⁵⁸ Wegner, *Imaginary Communities*, xvi, 74.

²⁵⁹ Printed account of the address given by Ebenezer Howard on 'Spiritual Influences towards Social Progress', Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

seemed to embrace the industry and technology of modern society.²⁶⁰ Bellamy's depiction was of a future society under the guidance and leadership of a technocratic middle class, in which citizens professed a belief in the "religion of solidarity": individuals as subservient to the nationalist goals of the state. The powerful institution in the society, the industrial army, reveals itself as a patriarchal authority, the mobilizing of scientific management strategies in order to promote male bonding and scientifically organize the labor, disciplining, and motivation of citizens. Men and women occupy traditional, segregated occupations and positions unchanged differences between the sexes, with women depicted as docile and weaker than their male counterparts. Bellamy does not address the state and position of Blacks in his novel. Bellamy's co-operative, state socialist utopia, in effect, was a Taylorist, centralized, bureaucratically-managed and population-controlled eugenic paradise in which healthy living is the disciplined middle-class individual, whose needs are provided by the state in return for his subordination to totalitarian management.²⁶¹

Howard's vision of garden city life, in comparison, exhibited a eutheic form of ideal living, underscoring the spiritual potential in people to become co-operative in the "properly" constituted conditions. In his description of the Town-Country Magnet, the town offered access to cultural fruits of urban modernity, but it

²⁶⁰ Bellamy, *Looking Backward*; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 34-6.

²⁶¹ Arthur Lipow, *Authoritarian Socialism in America: Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 84-8; Sylvia Strauss, "Gender, Class, and Race in Utopia," in *Looking Backward, 1888-1888: Essays on Edward Bellamy*, ed. Daphne Patai (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 68-90; John L. Thomas, *Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd, and the Adversary Tradition* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), 251-2, 261; Catherine Tumber, "Edward Bellamy, the Erosion of Public Life, and the Gnostic Revival," *American Literary History* 11 (1999): 610-41. For a history of Taylorism, see Martha Banta, *Taylored Lives: Narrative Productions in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

symbolized “mutual help in friendly co-operation”; in marrying town and country life, the community would yield “the best results of concert and co-operation gathered in by a happy people.” The garden city was constructed as a spatialized means of “awakening” the virtues of “brotherliness” and “goodwill”; it would inspire “all workers with that enthusiasm which unites men” to move to the planned municipality and instill a publicly-spirited built environment espousing of freedom and fraternity. Howard imagined not only that people with such qualities would be drawn to his garden city, but that the ideal would inspire each resident to embody these co-operative virtues in their everyday activities. No industrial army and scientific managing of citizens would be necessary, with individuals subordinating their spirit for the national good: the garden city would arouse the fraternal and co-operative spirit of its residents and “lead society on to a far higher destiny than it has ever yet ventured to hope for...”²⁶² Howard’s vision depended on an awakening of a middle class-styled public spirit.

In his rejection of Bellamy’s bureaucratic, state-managed approach in favor of a romanticized vision of the co-operative spirit and individual freedom of individuals on decentralized municipalities, Howard was undoubtedly influenced in some form by the ideas of Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin.²⁶³ Letchworth and Welwyn colleague Frederic Osborn reminisced that while formulating his ideas Howard “listened to all the preachers and the prophets, the reformers and the revolutionaries”

²⁶² Howard, *To-morrow*, 8, 10, 17-9, 117, 138-41.

²⁶³ Ward, “Ebenezer Howard,” 23; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 12; Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 37.

of the era, including Kropotkin who first arrived in London in 1881.²⁶⁴ Kropotkin was among the thinkers Howard cited as having formerly expressed ideas that came to undergird his garden city experiment, and in his revised *Garden Cities of To-morrow* Howard cited Kropotkin's 1899 *Fields, Factories and Workshops* to underscore the advantages of each garden city's agricultural estate in serving as a local market for fresh produce and farm goods.²⁶⁵ Through Kropotkin, Howard arguably came to seeing his garden city ideal as a co-operative experiment, in which a marriage of town and country living would bring with it a marriage of individualist and co-operative values, allowing the community to be a bastion of individual enterprise and public-spirit without the need of centralized, bureaucratic management.

While Kropotkin's writings are cited, along with the American economist Henry George's land reform classic *Progress and Poverty*, as helping to shift Howard's ideas towards questions of population decentralization and land rents, Kropotkin's belief in the importance of handicraft and manual labor underpinned Howard's notions of co-operative garden city living.²⁶⁶ Similar to Ruskin, Kropotkin's explication of a future society was founded on a lamentation of how industrial capitalism's imposed monotonous, "unnatural" laboring tasks upon workers. Kropotkin, similar to Ruskin, romanticized pre-industrial handicraft and lamented that "skilled artisanship" was disappearing and the artist was becoming "human slave of an iron slave' by modern industrialism. Whereas the agricultural

²⁶⁴ F.J. Osborn, "Sir Ebenezer Howard-The Evolution of His Ideas," *Town Planning Review* 3 (1950): 228; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 17; Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 36-7.

²⁶⁵ Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 31.

²⁶⁶ Beaves, *Garden City Utopia*, 17-8; Henry George, *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy* (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1935).

worker used to enjoy “keen intercourse with nature” through his labor, even this seemed “doomed to disappear for the sake of the division of labor. Kropotkin’s remedy rested on a perceived organic unity of “brain work” and “manual work” that exist prior to the proliferation of specialized work in modern industry and the removal of “men of science” from manual labor. “[E]very human being, without distinction of birth,” Kropotkin wrote, “ought to receive such an education as would enable him, or her, to combine a thorough knowledge of science with a thorough knowledge of handicraft.” The objective was to install what he called “complete education,” which entailed destroying the “pernicious distinction” separating manual and intellectual endeavor, and re-educating citizens in both scientific knowledge and technical training. Kropotkin’s conception of the healthy worker, in other words, derived from a mythologization of the agricultural worker, envisioning a people who could enjoy the pleasures of handicraft without being deprived of intellectual pursuits because of class position.²⁶⁷

Thus, Kropotkinian visions of healthy embodiment depended upon the spatialization of pre-industrial, agricultural labor, resting on an idealization of decentralized, municipal communities imagined to offer equal access to pastoral spaces and industrial occupations. In his 1892 *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin reinforced a truly socially egalitarian society needed to ultimately “make work agreeable,” pleasurable productive occupations that would not alienate workers from the fruits of their labor. Industrial and technological advancements, however, made

²⁶⁷ P. Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops; or, Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons 1913), 18-20, 363-409. See Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872-1886* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

possible the improvement of working facilities. “It is evident,” Kropotkin wrote, “that a factory could be made as healthy and pleasant as a scientific laboratory.” In this, Kropotkin was not necessarily advancing a wholly anti-modern treatise against industrialism, but positing that mutual cooperation extended to the decentralization of industry, where manufacturing could prosper in proximity to agrarian production. “A variety of occupations, and a variety of skill arising therefore, both working together for a common aim...” Kropotkin wrote, “are the true forces of progress.” Integrated agricultural-industrial communities would foster healthier factory conditions, remedying the tendency under capitalism for the well-being of the worker to be neglected. Indeed, Kropotkin noted how “we already find, even now, some factories so well managed...it would be a real pleasure to work in them,” factories with improved sanitary guidelines and technology and better organization of work. Such cleanliness and healthfulness of working conditions were not antithetical to the capitalist intentions of the factory: a healthier factory meant happier workers being more productive with more enjoyable factory occupations. In fact, worker content would seemingly spread to building “homes...infinitely healthier and more conveniently arranged than those of today.” The decentralization of industry onto smaller communities in proximity to agriculture, in Kropotkin’s anarchist philosophy, would foster healthy, content, and more efficient worker bodies, forestalling class conflict by improving worker conditions and making their labor activities pleasurable.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London: Allen Lane, 1972), 137-9, 204-7.

Such decentralized, industrial communities would allow workers to live cooperatively and harmoniously due to Kropotkin's conception of "mutual aid." In a 1902 critique of Darwinist texts that underlines the natural competitiveness of humans within evolution and special struggles for existence, Kropotkin argued humans, like all animals held natural tendency of animals towards cooperation, or "mutual aid." The Darwinian struggle for existence, in effect, compelled species, including "Man", to cooperate in order to "aid" each other in their struggles not just with each other, but against external environmental forces. Kropotkin traced the tendency towards mutual aid throughout teleological stages of human history, highlighting specifically the rise of medieval guilds, which provided "great latitude for individual initiative" while still functioning as a response to "man's need for mutual support," as an example of the ideal of "life in free, brotherly communities." Indeed, according to scholar Anthony D'Agostino, in Kropotkin's view "Mutual Aid found its highest fruition in the medieval free cities" in terms of being an example of a healthier social arrangement.²⁶⁹ This philosophical perspective reinforced an assumption by Kropotkin, as with others such as John Ruskin (as well as Marx, William Morris, and the British socialist Edward Carpenter) that the industrial capitalist mode of production deprived workers of a naturally healthier way of living and laboring relation to the land, both of which existed within the pre-industrial, pastoral livelihoods. Such an explication on the ill effects of urban, industrial capitalism left

²⁶⁹ Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*; Pëtr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (New York: McClure Phillips & Co., 1902), 223-9; Stephen Jay Gould, "Excerpt from 'Kropotkin was no Crackpot'," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 6 (2014): 1686-87; Anthony D'Agostino, *Marxism and the Russian Anarchists* (San Francisco: Germinal Press, 1977), 85-7.

untouched an inferred ideal embodiment exemplified by the agricultural workers and village artisan craftsmen of medieval Europe.

By basing their ideas on constructions of the pre-industrial agricultural worker and handicraft artisan as a form of ideal embodiment healthier than the “unnatural” division of labor of industrialism, writers such as Peter Kropotkin and John Ruskin left their ideas vulnerable to becoming embedded with bio-political strategies during their practical implementation. These works assumed the healthfulness of agricultural life, allowing their visions of healthy life to be imbued with not only the anxieties and values of middle and upper class reformers keen to civilizing the “degenerating” urban working class, and become a means of imposing a fixed construction of health and livelihood through a preconceived built environment. In terms of Howard, his ideas for merging town and country within a planned community, though in many ways indebted to Kropotkin’s writings, did not entail his concomitant political devotion to anarchist communism. Moreover, each garden city Howard’s was promoted to those with the means of private capital and advanced as a practically, revenue-generating private venture.²⁷⁰ This detached the idea of integrating industrial and agricultural work from the possibility of an embodied “moral economy” that could counter the national cultural milieu. The retaining of a traditional value placed on pastoral living allowed the power relations of national discourse to be imprinted on their embodied idealizations.²⁷¹ The idealized body

²⁷⁰ See Kropotkin, “Fields, Factories and Workshops”; Howard, *To-morrow*.

²⁷¹ By “moral economy,” I refer to E.P. Thompson’s noted historical concept for understanding how working class men and women came to defend traditional rights and customs as a counter to the new political economy of capitalist industry. I’m referring to Thompson’s concept here to emphasize how, when one focuses on the role of embodiment in Kropotkin, the defense of the traditional value of pastoral living served as a contradiction to any possibility of a moral economy in Thompson’s sense.

became a cultural locus through which reformers such as Howard imbued bourgeois anxieties, such as the worry of working physical and social degeneration within the overcrowded urban centers, into the prescribed experiences of residents within each garden city. Thus, it should not be surprising that many of the early middle and upper class supporters of the early garden city movement saw the “housing question,” which garden cities were to solve, as linked to questions of the “physical and ethical future of our people,” and the need to restore “the health and vigour of the nation” as an imperial power.²⁷²

Conclusion

Howard included few explicit prescriptions of modern, organized sporting, recreational, and leisure practices in his elucidation of the garden city in *To-Morrow*. In the book’s chapter five—adorned with a quote from the Charles Dickens novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* about the lack of a “love of home” and “domestic virtues” in the “dense and squalid masses” of urban centers, “where social decency is lost, or rather never found”—he specified that a “considerable part” of each garden city’s park space would be reserved for physical cultural pursuits such as cricket, lawn tennis, and “other playgrounds”.²⁷³ This is an important lack of detail, for it illuminates the garden city model’s vulnerability in being coopted by the bourgeois values of modern

See E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 76-136.

²⁷² *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...Report of Proceedings* (London: Garden City Association, 1901), 4-5.

²⁷³ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 58; Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop and Master Humphrey’s Clock* (New York: Macmillan & Company, 1908).

sports and organized spaces of “civilized” physical culture. With much of the embodied inferences and dimensions of *To-Morrow* linked to forms of pastoral labor and ideas of the co-operative virtues of rural living, Howard’s unexplained, yet substantial inclusion of middle and upper-class sporting spaces such as cricket fields and lawn tennis courts indicated a preference for emergent organized sports that were restricted, at the time, to the amateur, club spaces and leisure time of the moneyed classes.²⁷⁴ The sporting dimension of Howard’s garden city explains the community model’s correspondence with the social relations of not only bourgeois culture, but physical cultural practices imbued with dominant capitalist values. Howard may have been influenced by radical, anarchist thinkers such as Kropotkin, but the prescribed physical cultural spaces would ensure the garden city’s compatibility as a built environment attuned to the needs of capitalism.

Still, imagery, assumptions, depictions, and ideas of embodiment and physical culture permeated not only Howard’s explicated garden city vision, but the works and writings of those who in some way shaped Howard’s developing reformist impulse. The various notions and articulations of embodiment within *To-morrow* coalesced around theme of improving the health and well-being of the working class through a rethinking of the industrial capitalist division of labor, using largely middle and upper class conceptions of the healthfulness of medieval craftsman and pre-industrial, agricultural living as counterpoint to decry the unhealthy state of the urban industrial worker. It should not be surprising, then, that Howard framed *To-morrow* as a

²⁷⁴ Robert Lake, *A Social History of Tennis in Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Robert J. Lake, “Gender and Etiquette in British Lawn Tennis 1870–1939: A Case Study of ‘Mixed Doubles,’” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 5 (2012): 691-710.

palliative for the middle and upper class and their concerns about the state of the urban working class—not just in terms of living arrangements but in their physical condition and proximity to social degeneration—in order to persuade them to financially support the construction of a future garden city. This was why Howard took pains to outline the practicality and financial feasibility of the venture, devoting only a small percentage of the book’s pages to set forth the central idea of the garden city.²⁷⁵ Combined the instability of health, nature, and well-being as historical and social constructions, *To-morrow* became an ideological capillary through which planners and proponents could imbue their garden city designs with bio-political strategies, mechanisms, and values through accomplishing the model community’s overarching objective: the creation of a built environment emblematic of middle and upper class conceptions of health, healthy physical culture, and symbolic of the reintroduction of workers to nature.

²⁷⁵ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 56-7; Lewis Mumford, “Reevaluations I: Howard’s Garden City,” *The New York Review*, April 8 1965, Folder 53, Box 18, Series 8, Clarence Stein Papers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library (hereafter referred to as CUL), Ithaca, New York.

Chapter Three: Regeneration through Cottages: The Biopolitics of English Garden City Planning

On a rainy Friday afternoon in October of 1903, over 1,000 invited guests huddled under a marquee in a muddy field just behind a Tudor farmhouse, there to witness the official declaration of the site upon which Britain's first complete garden city was to be built. They were standing on the newly purchased Letchworth estate in the Hertfordshire countryside, just south of the road connecting the nearby towns of Hitchin and Baldock. Many of the guests were shareholders of Sir Ebenezer Howard's First Garden City Company, a private, limited liability venture formed to facilitate the planning, construction, and administration of a community reflecting the principles outlined in his lauded *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Others were Honourables, chairmen of nearby communities, and mayors of cities such as Oxford and Lewisham; an amalgam of middle and upper class supporters hopeful that the movement signified the national restoration of the perceived "crisis" of urban working class bodies and their dislocation from traditional pastoral occupations. The event's vice-chairmen were Ralph Neville, a liberal barrister and chairman of the First Garden City Company, and industrialists George Cadbury and William Hasketh Lever, whose model industrial communities Bournville and Port Sunlight, respectively, were guiding predecessors for Howard and the movement's objective of decentralizing the nation's factories. By all known accounts, none of the invited guests were urban laborers or members of the "degenerating" working class to which Howard and the Company sought to reform. For declaring the site of the first planned community built "to raise the standard of health and comfort of all true workers of

whatever grade,” this was a celebration not for laborers and poor citizens, but for those among the British bourgeoisie who financed and politically supported Howard’s venture and hoped the garden cities spelled the improvement of the social and physical health of those in the overcrowded and squalid urban tenements, and the collective national “strength” of Britain as an imperial power.²⁷⁶

The chairman of this declaration of Letchworth, the Right Honourable Earl Grey, spoke to the invited crowd of Anglo-Saxon men of his belief in the practicality of Howard’s vision, proclaiming that soon, on the garden city site upon which he stood, they would see the remedy of a certain “evil” he believed plagued early twentieth-century Britain.

What then is the evil? It is admitted on all hands that most of the larger cities of England, owing to their ill regulated and anarchic growth, have become the very cancers of our body politic, and that they are sapping the strength and poisoning the character of the Nation. No one who realises that physique and character are the products of environment, as well as heredity, can fail to regard the suburban excrescences of our smoke enveloped and air exhausted towns with feelings short of positive consternation. Streets upon streets of sunless slums with nothing to relieve their squalid and depressing monotony—little provision for recreation beyond that which is supplied by low music halls and still lower Public Houses; boys turned out of school at 14 years of age, and no organised influence to mould them into honest citizenship at the age at which their characters are most impressionable. These are the evils with which we have to contend, and unless some effective steps are taken to counteract their influence on the character, temperament and physique of our people, the manhood of our nation must deteriorate, and we shall not be able to retain our present leading position in the World.

²⁷⁶ “The Garden City Movement. Private View of Letchworth Estate, October 9th, 1903,” LBM3126, Garden City Collection, GCCSC; Miller, *Letchworth*, 27; “First Garden City Limited,” *London Daily News*, 7 October 1903, 10; “The First Garden City,” *The Bedfordshire Mercury*, 9 October 1903, 8.

In his speech, Grey's concerns of the state of urban laborers morphed into biopolitical objectives for Letchworth Garden City, articulating a British imperialist tinge that was inextricably political, racial, gendered, and physical cultural. His vision revealed deeply entrenched notions of idyllic embodiment, traditional values of Victorian masculinity and racial concerns that fed into the bourgeois constructions of "countryside" and architecture as the optimum, nostalgic environmental conditions for regenerating urban bodies. While the "principle object" of the company was to "promote and further the distribution of the industrial population upon the land," Grey's concern was clearly multivariate, centering on the preservation of the British "body politic," the "physique and character" of the urban working class, and re-cultivating the traditional "manhood of our nation" by re-connecting laboring bodies to the nostalgic spaces of English lore: the pre-industrial pastoral.²⁷⁷ Many of the likeminded financial and political supporters of the movement similarly saw the Letchworth project as a fruitful vehicle for reinforcing established patriarchy and emboldening British racial imperialism through the restoration of traditionally pastoral domestic values within a planned, "healthy" built environment. In their minds, Letchworth Garden City promised a resettling of workers onto environments that would be *properly* planned towards the object of inculcating bodies with the virtues of, using the words of the Viscount Peel (another nobleman invited to the 1903 declaration), "honest labour and honest recreation" through civilized, disciplined, and regulated bucolic pursuits.²⁷⁸ The first English garden city at

²⁷⁷ "The Garden City Movement," Garden City Collection, GCCSC; C.B. Purdom, *The Garden City: A Study in the Development of a Modern Town* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1913), 27-8; Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 54.

²⁷⁸ "The Garden City Movement," Garden City Collection, GCCSC.

Letchworth, in short, was a spatialized biopolitical project at once dominant, emergent, and residual in construction. The community was planned for the maintenance of working class bodies for a modern British Empire, a built environment at once modernized and invigorated with prescribed, “healthy” countryside and access to agricultural laboring activities. Workers could be socially and physically “improved” through benevolent management, the community’s material design would solve the dual crises of urban overcrowding and rural degradation, and resident bodies would be maintained through the organization and prescribed spaces of community life and interactions with specific, meaningful, “beautiful” bucolic landscape.

This is an ironic historical argument for me to posit, as the chief planners and architects of Letchworth, Sir Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, were much like movement founder Ebenezer Howard in that they were acolytes of radical, anti-modern, and anti-capitalist thinkers—Anglo men such as John Ruskin, William Morris and Edward Carpenter—and believers in the aesthetic politics of the anti-industrial Arts and Crafts movement. Yet, while Howard’s manifesto *To-Morrow* elucidated the general garden city ideals, it lacked an “architectural grammar and vocabulary,” through which cultural and ideational elements of Howard’s vision could become material in the form of an actual garden city community.²⁷⁹ As this chapter will explore, Unwin and Parker’s architectural and town plans were implicitly contradictory in that they were informed by anti-modernist, nostalgic impulses—

²⁷⁹ Robert A.M. Stern, David Fishman, and Jacob Tilove, *Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2013), 213.

their designs deployed to conjure images of a romanticized pre-industrial countryside village—and yet were part of a wholly modern strategy to plan and structure an innately healthier built environment as a mode of reforming the housing and living practices of the crowded industrial cities. They were practical plans for creating a modern Letchworth Garden City that could exhibit the anti-capitalist, co-operative values and politics of Ruskin, Morris and Carpenter by merging civilized civic spaces and architectural beauty with bucolic surroundings and interaction.

This chapter argues that the planners of Letchworth attempted to resolve the inherent tension in using modern town planning to resuscitate pre-industrial, countryside living arrangements by framing the planned community as one that would inspire and regulate healthy, contented working class bodies through the availability of agricultural labor activities and modern, organized, and landscaped spaces for physical cultural practices in the town proper. Though forms of socialist politics and ideas underpinned Unwin and Parker's writings and planning objectives, these British thinkers and planners were challenging the industrial capitalist mode through invented references to a mythical English pastoral past. As Raymond Williams explained, such nostalgic idealizations of a past "Golden Age" were at root an "idealisation of feudal and immediately post-feudal values: of an order based on settled and reciprocal social and economic relations of an avowedly total kind." The planners, in other words, used backward-looking celebrations of an idyllic pre-industrial and agricultural order as a critique of the industrial capitalist order, a contradictory "explicit social reaction" that preserved the traditions and positions of those holding property, and reproduced the values of "certain kinds of order, certain

social hierarchies and moral stabilities” by drawing from a particular, social class-bounded visions of English country life.²⁸⁰ To resolve this tension between tradition and modernity, Letchworth needed to be a built environment for the reformation of bodies and health as much as urban reform. By approaching the garden city as an agent of biopolitical as well as spatial reform, Letchworth was planned to become the paternalist vehicle for the reaping of British working class bodies and life within the contextual confines of industrial capitalism.

The chapter traces and analyzes the biopolitical agenda that emerged from the development of garden city movement planning strategies and the actual planning of Letchworth Garden City. In its material realization, Letchworth ultimately reproduced middle and upper class Anglo Saxon social relations and physical cultural practices, a consequence of proposing centrally planned housing arrangements for the urban working class without questioning bourgeois assumption of working class culture, nor the historical origins or class politics of their understandings of health, nature, and idyllic visions of pre-industrial life. The limited company formed to create the first garden city, in addition, required the raising of private capital for its objectives, leaving it vulnerable to the displacement of socialist concerns for socially conservative and industrialist ideals brought by the introduction of capitalist shareholders and the gusts and forces of the era’s relations of production. The result was a First Garden City Company dependent upon the political and financial backing of Anglo-Saxon men and reformers seeking to paternalistically improve the biology and social arrangements of the urban working class and inspire them to live according

²⁸⁰ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 35-7.

to middle and upper class ideals for the social, racial and national benefit of the British Empire. Within this historical and cultural context, the chapter argues that the planning of the first garden city at Letchworth became the site for the instituting of a nostalgic, bourgeois biopolitical order, an emergent practice formed from a cultural cacophony of dominant modern and residual anti-modern ideas, socialist, liberal and conservative values, and racial nationalist and eugenic notions of Britain as an imperial people in need of social and physical regeneration.

From *To-Morrow* to a Garden City Movement

The general understanding amongst garden city historians is that Howard's book was greeted with somewhat sympathetic, yet dismissive reviews within British circles. In 1925, on the subject of the British public's reception, Letchworth secretary and movement leader Charles Benjamin (C.B.) Purdom tried to retrospectively reframe and underscore the immediate support for garden cities:

The socialist liked it because of its semi-municipal character, and at the beginning of the century socialism on its practical side was strongly pro-municipal; the conservative because it promised a way in which private enterprise could help to solve the housing question; the liberal because it was a project of land reform. People of every shade of political thought, and of every state of society, readily gave its support.²⁸¹

Purdom's depiction of the conservative reaction seems accurate, for Howard went to great lengths in *To-morrow* to emphasize the community model's financial feasibility

²⁸¹ Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 51.

and how it could be “obtained by purchase in the open market” through private resources.²⁸² Purdom neglected to mention, however, that socialist and labor reactions were not as excited about the proposal. Edward Pease of the socialist Fabian Society, according to historian Stanish Meacham, “dismissed *To-morrow* with contempt.” Howard’s “plans would have been in time if they had been submitted to the Romans...[W]e have got to make the best of our existing cities, and proposals for creating the new ones are about as useful as would be arrangements for protection against visits from Mr. [H.G.] Wells’ Martians.”²⁸³ Other newspapers and observers saw the book as, in garden city historian Stephen Ward’s words, “an exercise in utopianism, fine on paper but unlikely ever to achieve reality.” Howard had simply “missed the point” in trying to mobilize a utopian solution for workers at the expense of ongoing class politics and the socialist movement. *The Times* put it succinctly: “the only difficulty is to create such a city, but that is a small matter to Utopians.”²⁸⁴ It was apparently one thing to explicate the garden city ideal in a published book, but something else entirely to turn the ideal into a material town.

The historical bridge between *To-morrow*’s lukewarm, respectful yet dismissive reception in 1898 and British town planner Sir Peter Hall’s assertion that Howard’s garden city was “overwhelmingly the most important response to the Victorian city...” requires further consideration.²⁸⁵ How did a generally dismissed, mocked vision of an ideal, preconceived community go on to become the pivotal and

²⁸² Howard, *To-morrow*, 12.

²⁸³ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 57-8; Miller, *Letchworth*, 19; Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 2.

²⁸⁴ Ward, “Ebenezer Howard,” 14; Miller, *Letchworth*, 19; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 68; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 77.

²⁸⁵ Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 7.

influential treatise of modern urban planning? The general narrative found within garden city historiography underlines the passion and dedication of Howard himself, his immediate promotion of his book and ideas through lectures and speeches, and his founding of the Garden City Association (hereafter referred to as GCA) as the primary causes of the ideal's dissemination. Biographer Robert Beevers wrote that Howard knew "resolute and tireless effort would be required of him if his scheme for a garden city...were to become anything more than ephemeral entertainment for reviewer."²⁸⁶ In December of 1898 Howard proceeded to travel and give lectures on "An Ideal City Made Practicable," promoting the ideals he espoused in *To-morrow*. As Letchworth historian Mervyn Miller explains, Howard's "ability to attract public figures respected for their balanced views," aided by his access to politicians through his current occupation as stenographer within Houses of Parliament, helped him quickly garner political support for the cause. Speaking to Arts and Crafts guilds, cooperative societies, the Land Nationalisation Society, and religious contingents, Howard soon had mustered support amongst the middle-class, middle-aged, Anglo-Saxon men on London, as well as Liberal Party members of Parliament, to form a formal organization, the Garden City Association (known today as the Town and Country Planning Association), for the promotion and realization of Howard's garden city ideals.²⁸⁷ The predominant narratives within garden cities histories follow a general chronology: Soon after publication, Howard dedicated himself to publicly speaking on the benefits of his garden city plans, mustering enough middle-class and

²⁸⁶ Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 68.

²⁸⁷ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 77-9; Miller, *Letchworth*, 19-20; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 29-30; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 57-9; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 68-70.

Liberal Party backing to form the Garden City Association in order to organize practical support for creating the first planned community.

This was more than a development and impetus for a new, healthier built environment, however. From the beginning prominent Association members heralded the Garden City as a solution to their upper class concerns of the uncivilized, unnatural state of the Victorian city and its corresponding impact on the degeneration of urban working class bodies. They often spoke their positions of support through assumptions of “positive” eugenics and racial imperialism with an evocation that surpassed even that of Howard’s in *To-morrow*.²⁸⁸ At the inaugural meeting for the Garden City Association, held at the Memorial Hall on London’s Farringdon Street in June Of 1899, the Liberal Party M.P. Scotsman Sir John Leng presided. In his remarks, Leng extolled the virtues of Howard’s plan, linking the vision with that of Plato’s “Republic,” Thomas More’s “Utopia,” and Francis Bacon’s “New Atlantis,” an invented continuity between Greek and upper class British history similar to the invention of amateurism during the same period.²⁸⁹ It wasn’t simply urban overcrowding and rural depopulation that plagued Britain, Leng asserted; it was the effects of such “gloom and pollution” on the “mental darkness and moral degredation[sic] of the occupants, most of whom are more to be pitied than blamed

²⁸⁸ In her history of eugenics ideas in early twentieth-century American popular culture, historian Christina Cogdell identified “positive” eugenics programs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as those targeting “the ‘fit’ and worked to increase the quality and number of their offspring...” “Negative” eugenics programs, by contrast, “worked to limit the reproductive capacities of the ‘unfit’ and their supposedly deleterious influence on the national bloodstream.” See Christina Cogdell, *Eugenic Design: Streamlining America in the 1930s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 46.

²⁸⁹ See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); S.W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18-34.

for dwelling in such environment.” The Garden City, he declared, would rescue such laborers and poor workers from their moral and environmental depravities, resettling them on communities offering access to “pleasant” countryside without “the dulness[sic], monotony, and stagnation of ordinary country life” and that “miserable, precarious, hopeless existence of the country labourer.” Only through such a community could the working class be given proper “social opportunities,” the “beauty of Nature,” “pure air and water,” “freedom and co-operation,” as well as “a field for enterprise for the flow of capital”; only with Garden City would the “social stagnation” of nineteenth-century Britain be transcended.²⁹⁰ The Garden City was not just a better planned community for Lenn: it was a bourgeois, Anglo-Saxon strategy to paternalistically “save” and restore the bodies of the urban working class.

Restoring Healthy Physical Culture at Bournville, 1901

At the Garden City Association’s first national conference in 1901, industrialist and liberal upper class supporters quickly steered movement concerns towards biopolitical and paternalist objectives: specifically, the practicality of creating deemed healthier, rural communities to civilize the urban working class and return them to active, healthy rural activities in conjunction with industrial decentralization. The conference was held and hosted in the town of Bournville, built by industrialist and chocolatier George Cadbury in the outskirts of Birmingham as a

²⁹⁰ “Garden City Association,” *The Dundee Advertiser*, 8 July, 1899, 7; “Garden City Association,” *The Morning Post* (London), 1 July 1899, 5.

model industrial village in the vein of previous factory town experiments such as Titus Salt's factory town of Saltaire and Robert Owen's New Lanark planned settlement. These community and industrial reform efforts arose out of nineteenth-century context of industrialist paternalism: capitalist businessmen seeking the moral and physical reform of their workers through planned communities where they could ensure worker health, occupational efficiency, and regulate their social and cultural activities.²⁹¹ This was a capitalist paternalism based in part on nineteenth-century constructions of human beings as biologically and socially determined by their external conditions, an iteration of Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle's "environmentalist" concerns that people's social and biological health depended on the state of their environmental circumstances. By reconstituting rural social and economic relations under the guise of a benevolent, altruistic industrialist—resettling workers onto planned settlements, with more hygienic housing and garden and park spaces, where everyday life could be shaped by the concerns of the company—the idea was that such model villages would ensure not only the health and well-being of workers, but business efficiency by instilling discipline and efficiency through the social designing of work and home life.²⁹² Such concerns were fed into the theme and "object" of Garden City Association's 1901 Bournville conference: "the

²⁹¹ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 11-19; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 73.

²⁹² Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Mats Deland, *The Social City: Middle-Way Approaches to Housing and Suburban Governmentality in Southern Stockholm, 1900-1945* (Stockholm: Novum Grafiska, 2001), 29-30; Robert Owen, *Selected Works of Robert Owen*, ed. Gregory Claeys (London: W. Pickering, 1993); Gregory Claeys, *Citizens and Saints: Politics and Anti-Politics in Early British Socialism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Ralph Jessop, "Coinage of the Term Environment: A Word Without Authority and Carlyle's Displacement of the Mechanical Metaphor," *Literature Compass* 9 (2012): 708-20; Neil Jackson, Jo Lintonbon and Bryony Staples, *Saltire: The Making of a Model Town* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2010).

desirability and practicability of a combined movement of manufacturers and co-operators to new areas, so that new towns may be established on land to be purchased for the community”; in other words, practicality of garden cities in furthering the rural industrial goals established by village experiments such as Cadbury’s Bournville.

George Cadbury’s Bournville, a company “story booklet” foretold, was in large part an outgrowth from his Quaker religious concerns for the urban poor and his time working at a Birmingham adult education school and his desire secure for workers the social and healthful advantages of village life. By the end of the nineteenth century, Birmingham worker housing, while “better than in most other large towns” in Britain, was littered with lodging houses ‘of the most abandoned characters,’ while city artisans and the middle class were migrating to the “healthier conditions” of adjacent suburbs.²⁹³ Cadbury “knew better than most industrialists of his time how great was the sum of misery caused by bad housing,” the booklet claimed. “Bournville was for him an opportunity to make a practical contribution to the solution of a social problem.”²⁹⁴ Bournville, however, was as much a business strategy as a paternalist attempt at social reform; through his industrial village, Cadbury linked worker health not only to architectural beauty and idyllic village life but to the regulation of worker efficiency through the incorporation of organized leisure, gymnastics, and athletic activities. As Bournville architect William Alexander Harvey recollected, George Cadbury himself remarked at the 1901

²⁹³ Michael Harrison, *Bournville: Model Village to Garden Suburb* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1999), 9-14.

²⁹⁴ *The Bournville Story*, 338.766 369 2 P, Bournville Village Trust Archives (hereafter referred to as BVT), Bournville, United Kingdom. For a history of the Bournville model industrial village in relation to the garden city movement, see Harrison, *Bournville*.

conference that his “intimate knowledge of Birmingham working-men...had shown him that the greatest drawback to their moral and physical progress was the lack of any healthful occupation for their leisure.” Their present craftsmen hobbies too “insufficiently recreative,” Cadbury concluded that his factory workers needed to be given more civilized pastimes, the pastimes of Anglo-Saxon privileged, and be brought “out on to the land, that he might pursue the most natural and healthful of all recreations...gardening.” Moreover, country cottages, adjacent to open and park spaces, were a predominant type of housing within Bournville, buttressing Cadbury’s leisure practice strategies by bringing workers back “into contact with Nature” through their homes and returning them to pre-Industrial village social arrangements. All of this was couched in Cadbury’s overall concern that “working men...be healthy and have healthy children,” revealing the eugenicist discourse prevalent amongst the British upper classes at the time.²⁹⁵

Further, the community and living arrangements of Bournville were promoted as fostering productive, friendly relations between owner and labor—a Bournville “spirit of loyalty to fellow employee and employer”—and a measure for preemptively ameliorating class tension by cultivating and disciplining each worker’s health and social development.²⁹⁶ Cadbury believed the hygienic and sanitary arrangements of the houses, adjacent to gardens and open spaces, would persuade residents to be more “cheerful and thankful” about their everyday lives and create more co-operation at

²⁹⁵ W. Alexander Harvey, *The Model Village and Its Cottages: Bournville* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1904), 9-11.

²⁹⁶ *Health in the Factory. An Account of the Work of the Medical & Dental Departments and of the Sick Benefit and Other Schemes in Operation at Bournville Works*, 3rd (Revised) Edition, October 1925, Publication Department, Bournville Works, 338.766 369 206 83.P, BVTA; “To Our Readers,” *The Bournville Works Magazine*, Volume 1, Number 1, November 1902, BVTA.

work and home for the overall betterment of the Cadbury company. He was so concerned about the relation of health to factory life that he issued a “Suggested Rules of Health” to new arrivals, detailing, among other aspects of everyday life, what Bournville residents *should* eat, how they *should* sleep—“Furnish your sleeping apartments with single beds; double beds are now little used in civilised countries except in the United Kingdom”—and why they *should* cultivate a family garden. “Man’s natural place is on the land... Work in a garden enlarges the minds and strengthens the bodies of your children.”²⁹⁷ While Howard and others affiliated with the Garden City movement saw Cadbury’s Bournville experiment as an important example in the relocation of industry of urban areas, industrial decentralization was from the beginning correlated to industrialist concerns for worker efficiency, the reinforcement of traditional social hierarchies, and the regulation of worker biology and social life through the restoration of rural life through planned gardens, open spaces, and country-style cottages.²⁹⁸

At the 1901 Bournville conference, the upper class delegates concerned themselves with the seemingly deplorable physical state of British working class, moralizing the issue of creating healthier, cheaper housing arrangements as a matter linked to the health of the British Empire and the civilizing of the working class. This included the re-housing of urban and rural poor; among the delegates present was industrialist Seebohm Rowntree, who would later detail the deteriorating conditions

²⁹⁷ “Bournville Village Suggested Rules of Health,” undated, BVTA; Stacey Barnfield, “From the archives: How to lead ‘healthier and therefore more cheerful life’ in Bournville,” *Birmingham Post*, 2 March 2015, <http://www.birminghampost.co.uk/business/creative/archives-how-lead-healthier-therefore-8736289>.

²⁹⁸ “Sociological Papers – 1904. Discussion,” Typescript of brief biographical notes, folder “Anecdotes by Ebenezer”, DE/Ho/F17/5, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

of rural poverty in a book titled *How the Labourer Lives*.²⁹⁹ In an opening speech to the congregation, GCA leader and liberal barrister Ralph Neville proclaimed, to delegate applause, that the question of urban overcrowding and rural depopulation “is a national question, nay it is more than that, it is an Imperial question...the ultimate destiny of our Empire depends on the character and the capacity of the citizens of this country.” Ebenezer Howard encountered Neville through reading his 1901 essay calling for population and industrial redistribution, and was delighted to find Neville highlighting the Garden City as a potential vehicle for such resettlement. Now as chairman of the GCA, Neville argued the “physical degeneration” of urban dwellers was “proceeding in some places at a very rapid rate,” and these people needed “physical development” by placing them in restored healthy conditions. “You cannot have physical development; you cannot have intellectual capacity unless you have sound conditions of hygiene as the basis of life of your countryman.” The “ultimate decadence and destruction of the race” would occur and the British Empire would be “doomed to failure” in its rivalry with European powers, Neville warned, if the nation did not restore the British people to a healthier balance of population resettlement and industrial decentralization.³⁰⁰

The Garden City, Neville declared, was a built environment model capable of restoring that healthy balance of more efficient factory labor with living near country spaces. Setting the stage for the subsequent eugenicist, imperialistic discourse of conference speeches, Neville declared that such town-country communities would

²⁹⁹ B. Seebohm Rowntree, *How the Labourer Lives: A Study of the Rural Labour Problem* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1917).

³⁰⁰ *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...*, 7-13; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 80.

preserve the “splendid stock...the energy and the stamina” of the “British race” by providing “healthy exertion and recreation” substitutes for the “unhealthy craving for alcohol,” the “unhealthy workshop or office” with its artificial light, and the elimination of extended commuting. “[W]ould not” the factory worker “be infinitely more capable of doing his work...becoming altogether a happier and healthier citizen,” Neville asserted, if instead commuting such time was spent “in the football or cricket field.” As an envisioned environment based on an upper class nostalgia for pre-industrial countryside villages and their assumed healthier living and social arrangements, or which middle and upper class leisure and sporting practices were inherent and integral, the Garden City offered the implicit regulation of working class life through material conditions attractive to the delegates’ concerns of urban degeneration. The Garden City would remedy the present unhealthy conditions without challenging capitalist attempts to increase worker efficiency by moving factories to rural districts, all the while helping to ameliorate class politics through improved housing standards.³⁰¹

In linking “physical development” with the restoration of British countryside living and the preservation of British national power, GCA discourse associated the recovery of the British nation with the imagery and values of the traditional rural village. As scholar Peter Vandergest writes, while notable previous histories of nationalism have often ignored the dimension of rurality in the construction of modern national identities, the imagining of a nation’s rural past has often been dialectically related to the making and reproducing of that nation’s dominant

³⁰¹ *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...*, 7-13.

historical narrative and presumption of national authenticity. Drawing from acclaimed historian of nationalism Benedict Anderson, Vandergeest explains how “nation-makers must invent national histories and national traditions” in order to resolve the tension between the nation-state’s modern origins and a nation’s desire to exhibit a seemingly long, continuous history. Modern national historical narratives, as a result, “re-construct the past to fit the mold of a distinctive national culture.”³⁰² The Anglo-Saxon, upper class men who spoke at the 1901 Garden City Association conference, similarly, invoking the rural village as a naturalized emblem of national health. The inherent healthfulness of the British countryside village did not require explanation because its historical mythology was an upper class construction compatible with predominant narratives of British racial nationalism. The healthfulness of the Garden City lay in its ability to capitalize on this racial mythology of countryside health.

There was a tension within the proceedings of the 1901 Bournville conference between the Association’s first resolution and the biopolitical significance delegates, particularly Liberal politicians, assigned to the promotion of garden city creation. The first resolution, announced by the young Arts and Crafts architect Raymond Unwin, called for the GCA to recognize “the great evils which arise from bad housing conditions,” urge the relevant local and county authorities to implement legislation

³⁰² Peter Vandergeest, “Real Villages: National Narratives of Rural Development,” in *Creating the Countryside: The Politics of Rural and Environmental Discourse*, eds. E. Melanie DuPuis and Peter Vandergeest (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 279-302; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991); E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998). For a history of rethinking the history of nationalism in European contexts, see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

for the condemnation of inadequate housing, borrow capital for purchasing cheap land outside the major urban area and the construction of cheap and “good houses for the people,” and engage with the local authorities “and of building and co-operative societies” of the possibilities in resettling workers in better housing alongside rural factories. Unwin’s short speech on the resolution did not expound on previous discussions of urban degeneration and British racial preservation, nor did he attempt counter such discourse. Rather, Unwin emphasized the importance of “relieving” urban centers through decentralization and housing working families in cottage dwellings. “Surely it is possible for us as a people,” Unwin argued, “to devise something better for housing than the dreary rows of miserable tenements that we see in all our suburbs.” In his depiction of working class housing Unwin furthered the criticisms laid by Socialist League leader William Morris, who argued that the poor were being “disgracefully housed” and denied “a higher standard of comfort...” at present. In laying out the GCA’s first resolution, however, Unwin’s underlying socialist politics do not seem to surface through his spoken words; the proposal for promoting and building garden cities and moving factories to rural areas emerges couched between Liberal speeches on the need to save the physical deterioration of the country through housing reform, and the racial, imperial, and eugenic significance of garden city construction.³⁰³

Following Unwin’s unveiling of the GCA’s first resolution, Liberal Aneurin Williams, who in 1906 would become the chairman of First Garden City Company,

³⁰³ *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...*, 13-4; William Morris, “The Housing of the Poor,” in *William Morris on Architecture*, ed. Chris Miele (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 122-5.

accentuated the biopolitical details of the “great evils” to which Unwin, and Ralph Neville before him, alluded.³⁰⁴ “The people who are constantly being drawn to our great cities...” Williams declared, “are the very pick of the English people...the people whose children, in the course of one or two generations, are reduced to a comparatively degraded condition.” Evoking the racial, “overcivilization” discourse of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon upper class, Williams proclaimed, “It is not that a certain number of the average of our race are being destroyed, but the very best of our race are being destroyed by the conditions of our great cities.” The GCA needed to “set the example” by establishing “at least one Garden City in the country,” showing the path through which local municipalities might follow suit. Even a quick reading of the proceedings is enough to uncover the biopolitical aims and perspectives of many of the conference delegates: while Unwin and Howard sought to explicate the practical measures of a first garden city, political and capital supporters espoused the movement’s significance as a means of thwarting the social and biological degeneration of the working class and its overall threat to the heredity stock of the British race.³⁰⁵

At least one high profile delegate at the conference was wary of the precarious alliance between the movement, politicians, and paternalist industrial capitalists such as Cadbury and Lever Brothers’ William Hasketh Lever. George Bernard Shaw was a longtime friend of Ebenezer Howard’s: in their early adult years both were members of the London Zetetical Society, a debating group of young British men

³⁰⁴ See Purdom, *Letchworth Achievement*, 112.

³⁰⁵ *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...*, 14-5.

who met to discuss “all matters affecting the human race.”³⁰⁶ After Howard’s death Shaw wrote to his son, remarking, “He was one of those heroic simpletons who do big things whilst our prominent worldings are explaining why they are Utopian and impossible.”³⁰⁷ Shaw was also, however, a member of the socialist Fabian Society, and towed the official Fabian stance that Howard’s Garden City model, his subsuming of class politics under the importance of industrial decentralization and rural repopulation and his seeking of Liberal rather than socialist support meant the scheme did not represent a genuine attempt at creating socialistic communities. Shaw was also a delegate at the 1901 Bournville conference, and afterwards wrote (but by all indications did not actually send) an extended letter to GCA leader Ralph Neville, warning the Association not to presume they could craft a trust deed that would restrict the activities and objectives of the capitalists and industrialists financially supporting the venture. In seeking the support of businessmen who might move their operations to garden cities and rural districts, Shaw argues that the GCA opened themselves up to the interests of capitalists, to which they would be largely unable to restrict.³⁰⁸ While Shaw’s letter largely concerned the economic and labor aspects of the garden city movement, his criticism alluded to the profound biopolitical implications of seeking capitalist and industrial support while clinging to a conservative vision of British health dependent on the restoration of the agrarian village form of living.

³⁰⁶ Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 13-4; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 12.

³⁰⁷ Newspaper article about George Bernard Shaw's letter to A C Howard, nd [1928], DE/Ho/F22/14, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

³⁰⁸ f. 247 Letter from G. B. Shaw to Sir Ralph Neville: 1900?, Add MS 50513, Bernard Shaw Papers, British Library, London, United Kingdom; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 70-4.

Nostalgia for a “Beautiful,” Healthy, “Merrie England” Village

While Liberal supporters such as Neville and Aneurin Williams pontificated the racial nationalist importance of garden cities, at least one delegate spoke on the healthful qualities and details of his vision of English countryside living. At the time a young architect, Raymond Unwin spoke not only of the Association’s first resolution, but on the question of housing within a future garden city-styled community. There were three “main natural circumstances,” Unwin declared, that a garden city design “must bow to”: “light, air, and cheerful outlook.” Each dwelling’s front should be face the sun (“no house can...face northward”), with open spaces instead of walled off compartments so that each house is “always fresh and sweet,” and surrounding communities properly designed to offer “something more for outlook than the dismal monotony of a narrow street.” What Unwin was calling for was architecture that expressed a spirit of co-operation, health, and beauty, for he believed “architecture always reveals the life it clothes and reflects its ideals.” Garden city architecture, specifically, needed to reflect a community “whose units will be bound together by common aspiration, by some definite relationship of mutual association...” In other words, the architecture and town design would need to instill a co-operative spirit amongst residents and dwellers, bringing “a new system of mutual relations” Unwin believed once existed “in Feudal days” before the deleterious effects of the modern industrial order. A co-operative community spirit

would spring from the carefully open communal gardens and open spaces, Unwin asserted, expressed in unity with the planned architecture.³⁰⁹

Unwin diverted from the previous Liberal speakers by addressing some of the aesthetic necessities of an envisioned garden city community, underscoring the emphasis middle and upper class reformers placed on the need for sunlight and fresh air within new worker housing schemes. Like the Liberal speakers, however, Unwin drew his inspiration from an invented vision of Britain's pre-industrial past, and the social and architectural unity of medieval villages, to validate his conceptions of architectural health and beauty. Unwin was a student and admirer of German and continental European medieval villages along with the cities of Britain; as he wrote in his 1909 *Town Planning in Practice* that the art of a town's architecture and civic institutions "must be the expression of the life of the community," he adorned the book's pages with pictures of German cities such as Nuremberg, Munich and Regensburg—along with a multitude of British, European villages with medieval architectural pasts—to exemplify the ability to relate beauty to civic buildings and city form. Sir Patrick Geddes' son Arthur recalled later in life that Unwin "enjoyed and admired German local growth-planning from the Middle Ages," though he worried about the linkages between German town arrangements and overriding expressions of imperialism.³¹⁰ Though his words and ideas were in part a critique of

³⁰⁹ Raymond Unwin, "On the Building of Houses in the Garden City," in *The Garden City Conference at Bournville...Report of Proceedings* (London: Garden City Association, 1901), 69-74.

³¹⁰ Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1909), xiii-xxii, 10; "Notes at random" from Arthur Geddes, Edinburgh, 1915-1930, Folder 5 – Personal Papers 4, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL; University of Birmingham Course Pamphlet, Folder 5 – Personal Papers 4, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL; J. Wreford Watson, "Arthur Geddes, D.ès L., Ph.D.," *Scottish Geographical Magazine*

the modern living arrangements established by the industrial capitalist order—the explication of a method of planning that emphasized the quality and beauty of life rather than the mundanity and alienation of row houses and slums—Unwin’s approach implicitly called for the restoration of Feudal living arrangements through town planning as part of its objective in making cities aesthetically and socially “beautiful.” Capitalist or socialist, regardless of their ideological background, the biopolitical dimensions of garden city advocacy appeared to arise through the thinker’s invention of the ideal and healthful attributes of Britain’s agrarian past.

By emphasizing the need for light, fresh air, and simple architecture, along with his nostalgia for Feudal architectural and social arrangements, Unwin articulated a personal allegiance to the British Arts and Crafts movement that gelled with Victorian middle class concerns for the “unnatural” state of industrial cities. As historian Eileen Boris explains, the English movement, composed largely of middle class, male applied artists, decorators, designers, and architects sympathetic to socialist and labor concerns, “began as a creative response to the precarious position of the art worker and the degradation of his work” as a result of capitalist processes of mechanization, standardization, and the increasing commercialization of architecture at the seeming expense of aesthetic quality. These applied artists were spurred by social thinkers such as William Morris’ writings and speeches detesting the degradation of art and aesthetics under capitalism, as well as John Ruskin’s ruminations of the links between art, beauty, and morality. They sought to reframe art

2 (1968): 127-128; Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915), 6-7.

and artistic production as inextricably tied to social expression, and saw the beautification of houses, furniture and everyday objects as part and parcel of protecting craftsmanship from the dehumanizing effects of industrializing, and give moral worth to the aesthetics of everyday life. Though propertied-class women did participate in the movement, working in design and handicraft pursuits such as weaving, male artists from privileged backgrounds largely gained recognition in Arts and Crafts public discourse, as they sought to revive the aesthetics of pre-industrial craftsmanship as a critical response to industrial capitalism's effects on standardizing everyday realms such as housing.³¹¹

Unwin's Arts and Crafts sympathies were bolstered by his personal affinity and support of the socialist ideas of William Morris and the British poet and philosopher Edward Carpenter.³¹² During his time studying at Oxford he attended speeches by Ruskin and Morris, hearing both deride the negative effects of laissez faire capitalism and industrial standardization upon handicraft labor and the aesthetic beauty of ordinary, everyday life. Working initially as a draftsman in the northern cities of Sheffield and Manchester, Unwin quickly became immersed in the late nineteenth-century socialist political rumblings within both cities. It was in Manchester that Unwin personally met Morris, becoming the first secretary for the

³¹¹ Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 14-9. For histories on Arts & Crafts approaches to architecture, see Chris Miele, ed., *From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Diane Waggoner, ed., *"The Beauty of Life": William Morris and the Art of Design* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003).

³¹² For histories of Morris and Carpenter, see Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (New York: Verso, 2008); Sheila Rowbotham, "In Search of Carpenter," *History Workshop* No. 3 (1977): 121-33; Stephen Coote, *William Morris: His Life and Work* (London: Garamond, 1990); Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Knopf, 1995); Thompson, *William Morris*.

Manchester branch of the Socialist League. Throughout the latter years of the 1880s Unwin wrote numerous essays for the League's *Commonweal* newspaper, cutting his political and rhetorical teeth on an array of topics related to capitalist political economy, including the difficulty of creating a co-operative community in a society rooted in competition and self-interest, and the effects of decreased manufacturing costs on labor. As a coal and iron works draftsman outside Sheffield, Unwin befriended Edward Carpenter after one of his lectures, and would become increasingly influenced by what he wrote that Carpenter held "a unique place" in the socialist movement and led a "rare," "complete and beautiful" life. Carpenter himself would write in his autobiography that Unwin was "a young man of cultured antecedents...healthy, democratic, vegetarian." While the founder of the garden city movement (Ebenezer Howard) held a more ambiguous relation to the radical class politics of his time, Unwin early on developed a more devout support of the socialist cause and a propensity to distrust the workings of capitalist political economy.³¹³

In part through Morris's socialist writings, Unwin developed a perspective on the sociopolitical relation between architectural design, planning of housing, architecture, and the restoration of more "dignified" surroundings for working class livelihoods. In an 1893 pamphlet for the Hammersmith Socialist Society titled "Useful Work Versus Useless Toil," Morris decried that industrial work under capitalism was "a mere curse, a burden of life," and the working class denied laboring acts that could offer the worker "rest" in the future, a "product" that is useful and

³¹³ Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 10-18; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 73-8; Notes marked "E.C. Millthorpe," Folder 4 – Personal Papers 3, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL; Scrapbook of *Commonweal* articles, Folder 2, Box 2, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL; Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams, Being Autobiographical Notes* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1916), 131-2.

beautiful, and “pleasure in the work itself.” He believed a person’s “livelihood” came through the work and toil they act upon Nature, and saw industrial capitalism as denying workers a hope for rest and leisure after their labor as well as pride and pleasure in their occupations. In a previous speech, Morris elucidated his vision of one’s proper and deserved “livelihood” that would provide worker rest and leisure: a “decency of surroundings”, including healthy and well-built houses, with access to “ample space” and nature, and a “general order and beauty.” Morris did not examine, in his speech, what he meant by surroundings that were “decent” and an order of life that was “beautiful,” but rather employed a vision of ideal working class’ labor and health conditions in order to castigate capitalism for denying workers a restful “decency of surroundings” they deserved because of laboring acts.³¹⁴

It is important, however, to highlight the embedded class politics of Morris and Carpenter’s visions of healthy, natural labor and livelihood, with both pitting the presumed healthier conditions of pre-industrial life to its degraded industrial counterpoint. Raymond Williams wrote how the “well-known habit of using the past, the ‘good old days’, as a stick to beat the present” is more historically significant than as a simple “recession into history.” In British history, notions of “Old England, settlement, the rural virtues—all these...mean different things at different times, and quite different values,” depending upon the contextual relationship between the British imperial state and the construction of a corresponding national consciousness

³¹⁴ William Morris, *Useful Work Versus Useless Toil* (London: Hammersmith Socialist Society, 1893), 3-7; William Morris, “Art and Socialism,” 1884, *The William Morris Internet Archive*, accessed February 11, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/as/as.htm>; William Morris and H.M. Hyndman, “A Summary of the Principles of Socialism,” 1884, *The William Morris Internet Archive*, accessed February 11, 2017, https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/principles/principles_xml.htm.

of “Englishness”.³¹⁵ In Morris, Unwin encountered a socialist politics fused with an English romanticism for medieval craftsmanship and the seeming pleasure feudal and agrarian handicraft workers found in their labor and interactions with the land. His ideas typified what historian Nigel Yates explains as the British Victorian “[n]ostalgia for the imagined harmony of the lost society of the Middle Ages,” a kind of “medieval revival” articulated in movements such as Arts and Crafts in part “to provide models of faith, stability and aesthetic unity” at a time in observers became increasingly exposed to the “often ugly process of the Industrial Revolution.”³¹⁶ Though Morris was not necessarily calling for a return to medieval life, his writings were steeped in an appreciation of medievalism, and his calling for “well-built, clean and healthy” housing with “abundant garden space” for the working classes was based in part on his view that pre-industrial, handicraft labor and work with the earth was healthier and more giving of pleasure than its industrial, manufacturing antithesis.³¹⁷

Carpenter, in his writings, reified bourgeois inventions of a past healthy agrarian “Englishness” and naturally unhealthy industrial present.³¹⁸ In his famous

³¹⁵ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 12, 18-22; Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32-41.

³¹⁶ Nigel Yates, “Pugin and the Medieval Dream,” in *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society*, ed. Gordon Marsden (New York: Longman, 1998), 65.

³¹⁷ Morris, “Art and Socialism”; Thompson, *William Morris*, 4; Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 5-6; Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 123-6; Caroline Arscott, “William Morris: Decoration and Materialism,” in *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, ed. Andrew Hemingway (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006), 15; Trevor Lloyd, “How to Write a Utopia: William Morris's Medieval Interests and ‘News from Nowhere’,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 2 (1975): 89-108.

³¹⁸ A delineated sense of “Englishness” distinct from “Britishness” pervaded Carpenter’s work. See Vincent Geoghegan, “Edward Carpenter’s England Revisited,” *History of Political Thought* 24 (2003): 509-527.

treatise *Civilisation, Its Cause and Cure*, Carpenter depicted modern industrial society as a historical state of “disease” that severed people’s organic and healthful unity with nature. The earlier historical stages of “Savagery” and “Barbarism” were innately physically and socially healthier because native peoples lived harmoniously with their natural surroundings and without the strife, division and selfishness indicative of modern society. Concomitant with his political views on sexuality, Carpenter held gendered, contradictory notions of “Nature” that undergirded his linking of health with access to nature and anti-modern spaces. He masculinized pre-civilized Nature by emphasizing the instinctual, animal qualities of such peoples, while also reifying “Woman” as innately embodying the intrinsic healthfulness of Nature. In tune with Western thought at the time, Carpenter simultaneously masculinized “Culture” in a binary opposition to “Nature,” leading him to philosophize on concepts of “love” and “health” that depended upon a restored, “natural” relation to his feminized conception of “Nature.”³¹⁹ The restoration of people’s social and physical health, in this conception of the Nature-Culture binary, lay in drawing from the social organization of pre-civilized peoples, with a conception of “Health” in conjunction with “Nature” as something dependent upon conditions of natural and social harmony that have been negatively impacted by the forces of industrial capitalism.³²⁰ Unwin, in his later writings, underlined the heavy influence of both Carpenter and Morris on shaping his thoughts on politics and town

³¹⁹ Beverly Thiele, “Coming-Of-Age: Edward Carpenter on Sex and Reproduction,” in *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*, ed. Tony Brown (Portland: Frank Cass, 1990), 119-21.

³²⁰ Edward Carpenter, *Civilization Its Cause and Cure and Other Essays* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1889), Edward Carpenter Collection, Sheffield Archives and Local Studies (hereafter referred to as SALS), Sheffield, United Kingdom.

planning.³²¹ It seems reasonable, thus, to posit that Raymond Unwin's subsequent emphasis, within his town planning (and garden city) plans, upon the healthfulness of the Britain's pre-industrial, pre-capitalist, agrarian village past was in part shaped by his exposure to conceptions of nature and healthy living espoused by Morris and Carpenter.

One can see in Unwin's writings on architecture and town planning, in the years prior to the creation of Letchworth, how such notions of British health and nostalgic imaginings of pre-industrial British life transmuted into architectural guidelines for creating healthier and more "beautiful" British livelihoods. The same year as the GCA's first conference at Bournville, Unwin published, along with his architectural partner and fellow Arts and Crafts artist Barry Parker, a volume of previous essays and speeches titled *The Art of Building a Home*. In it he espoused the intrinsic virtues of the ideal British country village. "As beautiful as an old English village.' The phrase arrests our attention and calls up many a pleasant picture stored in our minds," pictures and beauty that Unwin said were "fast passing away" due to the ramification of unchecked industrialization and urbanization. The underlying theme of Unwin's essays was his lamentation for the loss of a pre-industrial, countryside-dominant world, a middle class yearning for an era that, as Roy Judge reminded us, "never actually existed," for it was a nostalgic invention, "a visionary, mythical landscape."³²²

³²¹ Letter from Freda White (Edinburgh) recounting Raymond Unwin, Sept. 8th, 1962, Folder 5 - Personal Papers 4, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL.

³²² Roy Judge, "May Day and Merrie England," *Folklore* 102 (1991): 131; Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*, 91, 108. For works discussing this Victorian myth of 'Merrie England,' see Robert Blatchford, *Merrie England* (London: Clarion Office, 1894); Jason D. Martinek, "'The Workingman's Bible': Robert Blatchford's 'Merrie England', Radical Literacy, and the Making of

Within his essays on the relation between countryside village architecture, nature, and town design, Unwin's nostalgic conjuring of the healthful villages of British agrarian past functioned as a biopolitical imagining of what constituted a more ideal British community form. He juxtaposed the "sprawl" or urban "squalor" and "suburban gentility," with its "desecration" of British country spaces, with how pre-industrial villages and buildings seemingly "adorn a landscape." They are more "honest," Unwin underscored, because "[i]n the oldest cities" the boundaries between town life and "clean and fresh" countryside was abrupt and immediately adjacent, without obfuscation by the row houses of modern suburbs "which offend in coming between the town and the country." This nostalgic arrangement, restoring the quality of beauty based on visions past English agrarian villages, afforded a more convenient, healthful relation between town and country life and a better organization of life for British health. In describing such a village Unwin colored the imagery in middle-class archetypes and overtones: "[C]lusters of cottages"; wide village streets; dotted breaks of trees and foliage and large gardens; a church with a "parapetted roof and slender spire rising far above all the surrounding buildings"; a village green with sunny cottages, barns, farm space, and a village school surrounding it. This was not simply a lamentation on a lost era of British life, but a strategic nostalgia that incorporated classed notions of health, nature, and landscape within architectural design. Unwin and Parker's romanticized nostalgia for the idyllic healthfulness of the agrarian "Merrie England" past engulfed their turn-of-the-century treatise on proper

Debsian Socialism, 1895-1900," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 2 (2003): 326-346; Rebecca Jeffrey Easby, "The Myth of Merrie England in Victorian Painting," in *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Florence S. Boos (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), 59-80.

town planning, becoming a blueprint for restoring middle class attributes of health, nature, and aesthetic beauty with architectural and town design.³²³

Proceeding further, Unwin's nostalgia for 'Merrie England' village life was a Victorian, middle-class vision of health and a feminized, pastoral "nature" used to construct a sense of national "Englishness" and resuscitate traditional values of rural hierarchies and social arrangements.³²⁴ As this was a vision of how to return British people to a healthier state a living, it was a paternalist town planning strategy for endowing "proper" housing to the urban poor and working class. Personal diary entries when Unwin was a draftsman in Manchester 1887 indicate a consciousness of his middle class status and a desire to "make things better" in regards to the conditions of workers' lives. As well, Unwin described lower class workers through phrases such as "uneducated simple fellows"—reproducing Victorian conceptions of the urban poor—while complaining of the preferring leisure activities of townspeople, notably the propensity for drinking and gambling.³²⁵ As Standish Meacham explains, Unwin and Barry Parker were avowed supporters of the British Arts and Crafts ethos, believing in the ideal "of architect as teaching, compelling his clients to live 'better' lives in an environment that left them little choice when it came to defining what was true and honest."³²⁶

³²³ Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*, 83-90.

³²⁴ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 3-5; James Vernon, "Englishness: The Narration of a Nation," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997): 243-9. For histories of the construction of Englishness as a form of national identity, see Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998); Raphael Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume III: National Fictions* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

³²⁵ Raymond Unwin's Diary 1887, Folder 6, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 73-5.

³²⁶ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 3-5, 80-2.

In alleging the ill effects of the modern town in destroying the past “honest” boundaries between town and country, Unwin wrote that modern dwellers feel the degradation brought by unplanned sprawl “without realizing the cause very fully,” and he underlined the power and importance of the architect in designing not just a home but “what many of us really want...houses in which they...shall be able to live a life of less artificiality than our present 19th century existence, a truer, healthier life altogether.” The British people needed to cease their “demand for houses which look as though they belonged to the social grade next above that of the people who are to live in them,” and embrace a more natural, simple way of living. Similar to Edward Carpenter’s conception of “Health,” Unwin linked healthier British living to a sense of organic, natural unity, albeit through the form of medieval rural villages. In such residents lived harmoniously with not only the buildings but their natural surroundings and each other, becoming “conscious of and frankly accepting their relations” within the community. This was a nostalgic affirmation of traditional agrarian social arrangements in congruence with the built environment.³²⁷ What Unwin articulated was a biopolitical strategy informed by middle class, Anglo-Saxon nostalgia for medieval life, utilizing their pastoral visions as a means of improving the health and living conditions of the urban working class.

³²⁷ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 80-2; Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*, 16-8, 83-5, 91-3.

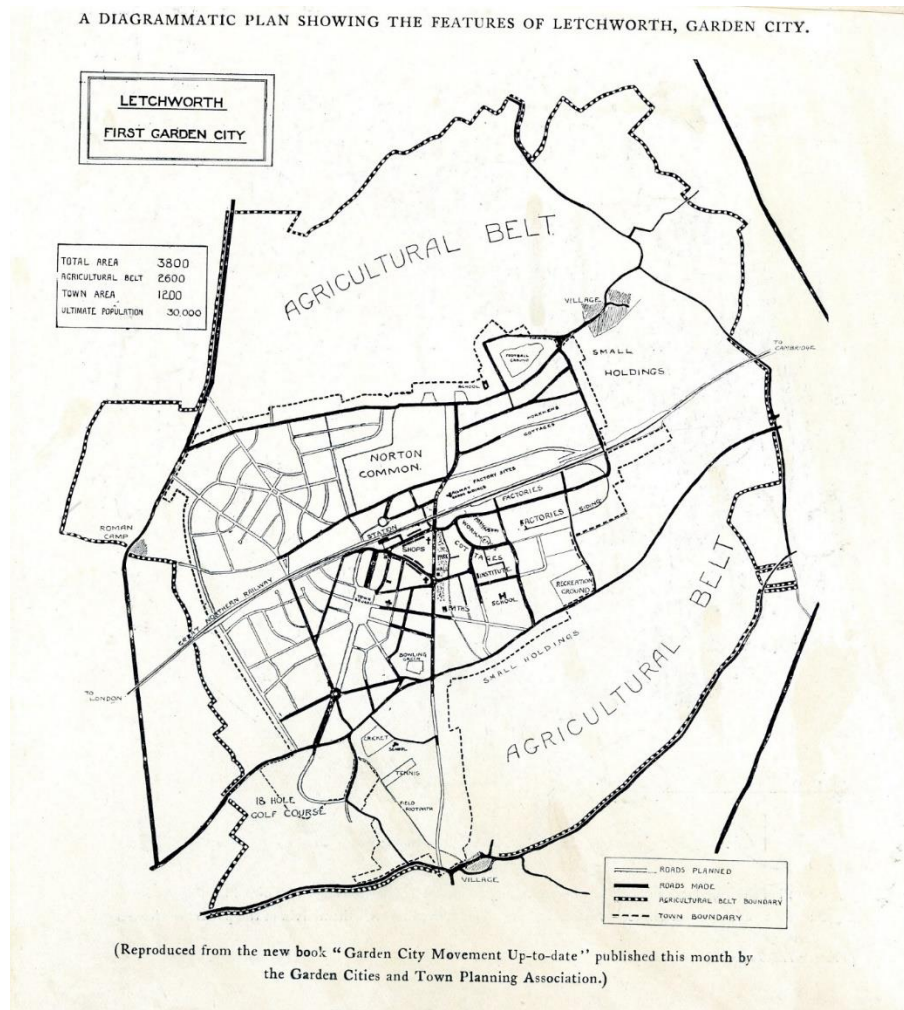


Figure 3.1 - "A Diagrammatic Plan Showing the Features of Letchworth, Garden City," 1913, LBM3120.1.20, Garden City Collection, GCCSC.

Letchworth's Biopolitical Agricultural Belt

As the financial and political support of the movement began translating into the actual activities and objectives of First Garden City, Unwin and his Arts and Crafts colleague Barry Parker were not quite yet the chief architects and planners of the Letchworth venture.³²⁸ Indeed, as C.B. Purdom explained in 1913, there was no

³²⁸ As Welwyn Garden City leader Frederic Osborn retrospectively acknowledged, the Garden City Association endured chronic failings to secure capital for the first venture. Gathering the political support of Liberal Party M.P.'s and the financial and public support of industrialists such as Cadbury

fixed plan for Letchworth at the start due “for the simple fact reason that the directors of the company did not know what they were going to do,” nor who would plan the community.³²⁹ After the 1901 Bournville conference, Unwin and Parker were commissioned by cocoa industrialist Joseph Rowntree to plan the layout of his model village of New Earswick, outside York. One can tangibly see the developing paternalist, nostalgic biopolitics of Unwin and Parker’s planning as they designed Arts and Crafts-styled cottage housing in the model village. In many ways the planning of New Earswick exhibited complementary ideals to the garden city movement—the village trust deed stated its objectives in securing “better houses” with gardens for factory workers so they could “enjoy a fuller and freer life”—and the building of countryside cottage-styled dwellings was a pivotal element of Unwin, Parker, and Rowntree’s visions of a healthier village environment. As they strove to incorporate Arts and Crafts ethics and principles of architecture, they arranged the New Earswick cottages to allow for a low housing density and greater access to sunlight, and recommended all dwellings be without parlors and have large, common living rooms on the first floor to inspire traditional familial relations within the home. New Earswick tenants object to this recommended elimination of parlor rooms, as the parlor had long signified upward mobility and a higher standard of living that workers linked with moral value.³³⁰ Unwin and Parker, however, felt the substituting of the parlor for the large common was architecturally necessary regardless of tenant

and Lever was vital for such an initiative. See Frederic J. Osborn, *Green-Belt Cities* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 59; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 98.

³²⁹ Purdom, *Garden City*, 39.

³³⁰ Peter Scott, *The Making of the Modern British Home: The Suburban Semi and Family Life between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32.

concerns, as only the single, common room could engender the “sense of cosiness” and nostalgic domesticity they associated with the natural healthfulness and social hierarchy of pastoral village life. The planners believed their conceptions of health and beauty took precedence over the desires of the would-be worker residents. One can argue that Unwin and Parker cut their planning and biopolitical teeth in their housing and village designs at New Earswick, and would revisit worker objections to paternalist architectural regulations when they began to implement their plans for Letchworth.³³¹

While Unwin and Parker were preoccupied with the planning and design of Rowntree’s New Earswick model village, Ebenezer Howard enlisted among others the liberal industrialist and teetotaler William Hasketh Lever to interview candidates for who would plan the Letchworth’s layout. At the time Lever was one of the principle shareholders of the Letchworth venture and was serving on First Garden City’s board of directors.³³² Much like fellow board member George Cadbury, Lever’s prominent presence in these early years of the garden city movement reveals the problematic paternalist and biopolitical aspirations of the Letchworth community project. His model industrial village Port Sunlight, where he relocated his soapmaking operations outside Liverpool, paralleled Cadbury’s Bournville as key ideological precursors to the first garden city. It is important to highlight, however, what author Roger Hutchinson calls the “benevolent dictatorship” of Port Sunlight:

³³¹ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 85-8; Buder, *Visionaires & Planners*, 87; Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*, 4-5, 116-7. For sources on the history of Unwin and Parker’s planning of New Earswick, see Barry Parker, “Site Planning: As Exemplified at New Earswick,” *The Town Planning Review* 17 (1937): 79-102; Cheryl Buckley, “From York to New Earswick: Reforming Working-Class Homes, 1899-1914,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 16 (2008-2009): 92-106.

³³² Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 52-3; Miller, *Letchworth*, 25-7; Ward, *The Peaceful Path*, 39.

Lever's overt regulating of village life and the private lives of his worker-residents. This form of biopolitics was encased in Lever's promoted "rethinking" of profit-sharing he called "prosperity sharing." The underlying idea was, rather than simply impart a portion of company profits to his workers for their efforts, Lever offered workers that he would "to provide...everything which makes life pleasant...nice houses, comfortable homes, and healthy recreation," in exchange for them allowing him control and regulation of Port Sunlight life. The village was to improve factory worker health, Hutchinson writes, a "golden security" for workers in the form of a well-built home, green space, and the recreation and social discourse of village life, if in return they relinquished their self-determination and collective rights. This, Lever's argued, was the only healthy alternative to helping factory workers, for if he simply gave each a share of the profits, it "will not do you much good if you send it down your throats in the forms of bottles of whisky, bags of sweets, or fat geese for Christmas."³³³ A prominent industrial supporter of the Garden City Association and influential figure on First Garden City's Board of Directors, Lever's benevolent regulation of Port Sunlight worker bodies and everyday life harmonized with the biopolitical and regenerative objectives of the first garden city project.

The benevolent paternalism of Lever's motivations for created Port Sunlight village was mutually related to his upper class understanding of working class life and belief that a planned environment would "socialize" and "Christianize" their social and biological constitution. Personally involved in the initial planning of

³³³ Roger Hutchinson, *The Soap Man: Lewis, Harris and Lord Leverhulme* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2003), 1-4; Volume 2 of Progress, Printed and Published for Their Staff by Lever Brothers Limited, Port Sunlight, 1901, Port Sunlight Village Trust Archives (hereafter referred to as PSVTA), Port Sunlight, United Kingdom.

houses on the village site, by 1890 Lever oversaw the construction of at least twenty-eight model Old-English style houses in the village, in order to recall images of pristine English countryside living. His motivation, however, was constantly encapsulated in a condescension of his conception of working class life: he built the houses, Unilever historian Charles Wilson wrote, so that “workers could...know something more of life than going to and from a factory and drawing wages on a Saturday night.” While observers touted the objective health improvements Port Sunlight offered residents—English writer W.L. George wrote in 1909 that Port Sunlight offered the “best possible” cottages “for the working man” with kitchen, bathroom, and the elusive parlour space included—Lever asserted close supervision of community activities. He mandated that young girls wishing to attend Port Sunlight’s weekly “winter dances” submit a list of names of boys they wished to Lever Brothers’ social department. The company would then issue invitations to young boys at the department’s discretion. Lever also placed the upkeep of housing front gardens under company management, a response to his view that tenants used the spaces for “fowl runs,” “refuse heaps,” and exposed “family washing.” In effect, the provisioning of green space, the improving of factory conditions and cleanliness, was integral to improving the efficiency of factory organization, and dispel conflict between workers and owners. From the beginning, Port Sunlight—with its arranged garden plots, preserved public green spaces, and improved housing—was a planned industrial community cloaked as a benevolent project in social engineering, with the aim of producing “cheerful” workers who would enjoy living in more “pleasant” surroundings than in urban housing tenements. While Observers touted the village’s

improved birth rates in relation to nearby Liverpool, Lever's books, speeches, and villages regulations exhibit his deeply paternalist and politicized logic underlying Port Sunlight's creation, and his linking of heath to particular conceptions of "pleasant" English pastoral spaces.³³⁴

First Garden City chose Unwin and Parker as the consulting architects in part because their submitted plans seemed to complement Howard's residual nostalgia for preserved, unaltered agrarian landscape. Howard and the board (including Lever) settled on Unwin and Parker's plan for Letchworth's layout and arrangement specifically because the architects molded their proposed town design to the particular cartography and naturally healthful features of the estate. In a 1913 essay on the practical planning of Letchworth, Unwin explained that the natural features and existing transportation lines "determine[d] the main lines of the scheme," causing them to account for the Great Northern Railway connection and the pre-existing roads to Hitchin and nearby villages when determining the spaces to preserve as the surrounding agricultural belt. It is clear when reading Unwin's account that the preserving of natural features, without disrupting necessary industrial infrastructure such as the railway line, figured centrally in Letchworth's initial layout. Having spent the previous days traversing the local landscape, Unwin incorporated the

³³⁴ Charles Wilson, *The History of Unilever: A Study in Economic Growth and Social Change, Volume 1* (London: Cassell, 1970), 144-146; Edward Hubbard and Michael Shippobottom, *A Guide to Port Sunlight Village* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005); W.L. George, *Labor and Housing at Port Sunlight* (London: Alston Rivers, Limited, 1909); Volume 1 of Progress, the new name of the Port Sunlight Monthly Journal, 1899-1900, PSVTA; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 17-43; For histories of the politics of Lever's Port Sunlight, see David J. Jeremy, "The Enlightened Paternalist in Action: William Hasketh Lever at Port Sunlight," *Business History* 33 (1991): 58-81; Clyde Binfield, "The Bolton Prelude to Port Sunlight: W. H. Lever (1851-1925) as Patron and Paternalist," *Studies in Church History* 42 (2006): 383-393; Amanda Rees, "Nineteenth-Century Planned Industrial Communities and the Role of Aesthetics in Spatial Practices: the Visual Ideologies of Pullman and Port Sunlight," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 29 (2012): 185-214.

preservation of historical rural roads, paths, and farmhouses within the plan, suggesting the old manor house of Letchworth Hall as “a most pleasing site” for a “pleasure park” near the center of the town, and the keeping of historical roadways. This, however, did not deter Unwin’s class-restricted perspective on beauty, landscape, and housing: he noted in the initial plan the “great attractiveness” of the southwestern end of the estate, with pastoral vistas that made them, in his words, “one of the best areas for the residences of well to-do people...”³³⁵ By attuning the community’s layout of streets and spaces to the particulars of Letchworth’s agrarian landscape, Unwin and Parker’s plan offered First Garden City a layout that would preserve a bourgeois conception of healthy environment by protecting agrarian spaces that bore striking a resemblance to the English rural ideal of the period’s British urban commercial class.³³⁶

This residual nostalgia, however, was linked with the emergent and dominant cultural components of the Letchworth scheme, as planners prioritized the purchasing, protecting and modernizing of Letchworth’s agricultural surroundings in order to promote the community as a healthful and traditionally pastoral, yet modern and industrial-friendly planned environment. As part of their process of development, First Garden City members (including Howard) commissioned Unwin and Parker to devise the town plan and layout for Letchworth after purchasing the estate, and in tandem with the laying of sewer and public utilities. Letchworth’s first

³³⁵ Raymond Unwin, “The Planning of Garden City,” in *The Garden City: A Study in the Development of a Modern Town*, by C.B. Purdom (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1913), 222-229; Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 53-8; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 95-122; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 77-95; Ward, *The Peaceful Path*, 40-41.

³³⁶ Paul Rich, “The Quest for Englishness,” in *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society*, ed. Gordon Marsden (New York: Longman, 1998), 259.

year was largely dedicated to surveying the estate, establishing the water supply and drainage system, and beginning the construction of gas works and road capable of sustaining a population of 33,000 people, the ideal number Howard specified in *Tomorrow*.³³⁷ As a community in the Hertfordshire countryside and just an hour commute by train to London, the planners understood the importance of selecting a site where the recent innovations in train technology and local transport could be felt.³³⁸ According to Purdom, the company approached the development of the town by focusing on laying the public services, roads, and building plots. After establishing the proper conditions, they would leasing the plots to private builders. The Company did not do the actual building of houses and cottages, and only conducted detailed site planning in consultation with the commissioned architects, of which Unwin and Parker were primary. The underlying idea was that this approach would allow the town to grow “naturally” as the laid out spatial and pastoral conditions, with its bucolic and modernized healthfulness, would “naturally” attract would-be residents. This approach, however, was also a result of the company’s enduring difficulties in raising capital for the venture, causing them to rely on private and co-operative building associations for the creation of community dwellings. A year after the venture broke ground, there were mostly sites for houses and factories, but little actual construction. W.H. Lever tried to persuade the company to buy up and cheaply lease the outerlying areas of Letchworth in order to quickly attract builders and factories, but company directors rejected the plan as it would jeopardize

³³⁷ Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 15-7.

³³⁸ Osborn, *Green-Belt Cities*, 61, 63-64; Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 50; Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 53; Helen Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3-5.

Letchworth's affinity with Howard's Garden City principles, namely the preservation of the agricultural belt. By modernizing and protecting of the estate's existing agricultural spaces, the company sought to showcase the Letchworth's "natural" attractiveness and healthfulness, an approach that reinforced the community's intended reformist significance.³³⁹

Howard's *To-morrow* provided the company with a preconceived understanding of the agricultural belt as the environmental linchpin for Letchworth's idyllic surroundings and planned naturally healthfulness. Through Howard and their own predispositions to similar conceptions of pastoral "English" national identity, the planners assumed, without much explication, the belt's importance to the venture's stated biopolitical objectives. Walter Creese argued that the "greenbelt" was a utilitarian and aesthetic aspect of the Garden City: Howard thought the nearby belt would afford a local marketplace for adjacent farmers, and access to local produce and fresh milk for the residents. As Melanie DuPuis explains, middle class Victorian reformers advocated the reform of agricultural products such as milk as part of their attempts to return urban dwellers to more naturally, healthy ways of life. The belt's landscape, in the company's middle class, residual vision, was the necessary backdrop for healthy living: along with the improved housing, the inhabitants would live a more agrarian lifestyle to the point of sharing in rural pursuits. The nearby town, on the flip side, would give agricultural laborers a chance to engage in leisurely

³³⁹ Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 60-4; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 203; Purdom, *The Garden City*; Miller, *Letchworth*, 22-7, 42-3, 53; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 35; The Garden City Movement. Report of Speeches Delivered at Meeting held on the Letchworth Estate, Friday, October 9, 1903, LBM3056.33.32, Garden City Collection, GCCSC; *Letchworth: The First Garden City in England, Entirely Surrounded by an Agricultural Belt of 3,000 Acres*, pamphlet, 1923, LBM3120.3.70, Garden City Collection, GCCSC.

activities previously unavailable. The agricultural belt, in short, was to be the environmental means of fulfilling the planners' Victorian reformist visions, where roomier bucolic spaces, fresh air, and ample sunlight would be a mere leisurely stroll away. While having a practical use in terms of stymieing encroaching development, surrounding belt symbolized the nostalgic restoration of a bucolic, Anglo-Saxon Eden, and was the planning component that would provide the necessary biological regeneration exemplary of garden city planning. As a result, much of the discourse and planning concerning Letchworth's development addressing the complex issues involved with housing and architecture: the planners assumed the epidemiological and social efficacy of their bourgeois conception of healthy rurality provided by the agricultural belt. Once the company purchased the estate, they mandated 2,500 of the 3,822 acres of the total community to encompass the surrounding spaces of the belt, less than the standard set of land Howard originally recommended. Questions lingered as to the community's leasing procedures and its ability to promote small holding farming, but there was no question as to the belt's innate healthfulness.³⁴⁰

The planners' residual nostalgia for the countryside entered into the town's designed form through beautification strategies such as the arrangement of trees and shrubs along roads, and the protection of old trees within building plots. This

³⁴⁰ E. Melanie DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 18-31; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 205; Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 90-1; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 99; Cecil Harmsworth, *Some Reflections on Ebenezer Howard and His Movement*, pamphlet, 1936, Garden Cities and Town-Planning Association, The Sixth Ebenezer Howard Memorial Lecture, LBM3056.33.46, Garden City Collection, GCCSC; Typescript of address given by Howard to Belgian representatives at Letchworth, Feb 11 1915, Folder 12, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS; Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 103; David H. Haney, *When Modern Was Green: Life and Work of Landscape Architect Leberecht Migge* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 4.

construction of tree-lined, middle-class residential streets, along with the subsequent building of cottage housing, would become the picturesque “street pictures” promoting the success of the Garden City’s plan.³⁴¹ Much like the modernizing of the estate through the laying of public utilities and sewers, the planting and arranging of trees along with the construction of roads and boulevards preceded the construction of houses and town buildings. As early as 1904, trees were planted along the side of newly constructed roads, creating tree-lined boulevards, while dwelling allotments were still in the early stages of being let for building purposes. According to Walter Creese, the planners sought to materialize Howard’s originating thesis to combine “the advantages of town and country life” through the planning of environmental features “to reinforce the sense of place.” This influenced the planning approach taken by Unwin and Parker and the particular attention they gave to including tree species along Letchworth’s streets. One particular component Unwin implemented was the planting of a different species of trees along each road, forty-five different species planted in all. On this, Unwin remarked that the potential natural beauty the trees would provide made the provision important, for “the English workman might be tempted to vary his route home” to witness the various blooms and colors during the seasons. Unwin and Parker also made sure existing trees were not cut down as a result of housing construction, with the existing natural “pleasantries” integral to Unwin’s devotion to architectural and town arrangements that left unobstructed not only the land’s distinct environmental features but also vistas of the surrounding countryside. The idea was to preserve town resident’s access to the beauty and

³⁴¹ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 88; Osborn, *Green-Belt Cities*, 66-67.

healthfulness of bucolic space, a residual scheme to invoke the natural splendor of the pre-industrial rurality that will also a key component for the company's racial nationalist aims. For, in responding to the question of including trees and other environment aspects into the town plan, Letchworth chairman Ralph Neville reminded that the British needed to be returned to "the presence of nature" to strengthen the British populace against the greater proportion of rural citizens in Germany and America.³⁴²

It was no coincidence, then, that these middle and upper class aspects of the Letchworth environmental arrangement enticed mostly young Anglo professionals and artists from urban middle and upper classes as the first inhabitants of the Letchworth. According to retrospective accounts by community leaders, the first inhabitants of the estate were young professionals looking to escape the confines of London and resettle onto the healthier surroundings offered by the estate and the potential in building a new home. Company secretary Purdom rejected the narrative that Letchworth's first residents were "cranks" and "social extremists," but he admitted more than a few were supporters of the co-operative and utopian communities of the era. Observers emphasized was how the settlement attracted "ordinary" young urban professionals—doctors, lawyers, architects—who were "pleasant," politically independent, and excited for what seemed to be "Morris' *News from Nowhere*...being realized."³⁴³ By 1907, the middle class sensibility of the

³⁴² "Building Operations on the Site," *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1904, 3; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 207-9; Purdom, *The Garden City*, 77, 90; "Beautiful Letchworth Society", *The Citizen* (Letchworth), LBM4345, 1 May 1925, Garden City Collection, GCCSC.

³⁴³ Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 58-9, 60-4; "Letchworth—The Garden City," *The Sphere* (London), 12 September 1908, 232; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 35; Ward, *The Peaceful Path*, 37.

community became publicly apparent, with British newspapers reporting the prevalence of debates and lectures “on vegetarianism, social Christianity,” and “the raising of the moral tone of dustmen” in the community, as well as the lack of “places of entertainment” ordinary urban workers enjoyed. In this absence of urban attractions, Letchworth leaders, according to the *Daily Mail*, forgot that “the mass of men are childlike in their tastes,” and that residents would commute to the nearby town of Hitchin to visit their music halls and playhouses. In concert with the environmental landscape, Letchworth quickly became a cultural den for the middle class, exhibiting the “dullness[sic]” typifying idyllic pastoral life.³⁴⁴

Early residents wasted little time in securing spaces for sporting clubs that reproduced the middle and upper class, English pastoral mentality of the estate. As the Company worked to lay out housing allotments, roads, and utilities for the estate and community, plans were already made, in concert with Howard’s vision, for a local golf club. While town planners, including Unwin, objected to including workers in the management of the newly erected community center, middle class leisure facilities such as the golf club escape public debate.³⁴⁵ As sport historian Richard Holt explains, golf was a highly popular sport for middle-class, middle-aged Anglo men and women at the turn of the century, with suburban golf clubs helping to shape social networking within the suburban environment and mix business interests with leisure on a planned rural setting. As a “distinctly bourgeois form of sociability”—the urban and rural working class could not afford the member fees,

³⁴⁴ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 91; “Reformers—And Human Nature,” *The Daily Mail*, 11 December 1907, 4.

³⁴⁵ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 91.

much less the playing costs of the pastime—English suburban golf clubs exemplified middle-class suburban living, providing what historian Jane George calls “institutional sociability” through the privatization of a sport and leisure practice and restricting of participation to paid members regulated by club rules.³⁴⁶ Howard linked the incorporation of middle class leisure practices with the planned healthfulness of his Garden City in *To-morrow*, writing that a “considerable part” of Garden City park space be devoted to sporting spaces and grounds where clubs could “contribute to the expense of keeping” the grounds “in order.”³⁴⁷ The golf club appeared to have been popular, with a local movement arising as early as September of 1904 to create a club that would rent the course from company directors. They even discussed the possibility of creating a residential hotel and pavilion for the pleasure of golfers. The allocation of a golf course seems to have been included within early schemes for Letchworth—a recreational provision that, as one newspaper proclaimed, was “one of the wisest steps to check the physical degeneration” of the “present time.”³⁴⁸ As a class-restrictive practice in which natural and cultural spaces could be “nicely juxtaposed” through landscaping and aesthetic manicuring, a semi-country golf club served as an ideal physically cultural form to reproduce the Garden City’s ideal of

³⁴⁶ Richard Holt, “Golf and the English Suburb: Class and Gender in a London Club, C.1890-C.1960,” *The Sports Historian* 18 (1998): 76-8; Jane George, “‘Ladies First’?: Establishing a Place for Women Golfers in British Golf Clubs, 1867-1914,” *Sport in History* 30 (2010): 288-308.

³⁴⁷ Howard, *To-morrow*, 57-8.

³⁴⁸ “Spying the Land,” *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1904, 3; “A New Garden City,” *Northwich Guardian*, 14 December 1904, 3; “Town and District News,” *Herts. And Cambs. Reporter*, 9 September 1904, 8.

healthful, bourgeois embodiment, a leisure practice reinforcing how merging country environment with controlled town life produce a space for optimal health.³⁴⁹



Figure 3.2 – Recent photograph of the former “Agricultural Belt” of Letchworth, Garden City, now conserved as the Garden City “Greenway” of walking and bike trails, maintained by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (originally First Garden City, Limited). Photograph taken by author.

³⁴⁹ Holt, “Golf and the English Suburb,” 78-80. By 1923, pamphlets made by the First Garden City Company at promoted the healthfulness of Letchworth by underscoring the availability of “open-air recreations” such as its golf facilities. *Letchworth: The First Garden City in England, Entirely Surrounded by an Agricultural Belt of 3,000 Acres*, 1923, LBM3120.3.70, Garden City Collection, GCCSC.



Figure 3.3 – Recent photograph of Letchworth Garden City housing designed according to aesthetic standards established by Unwin and Parker. Note the red tile roofing material. Photograph taken by author.

Healthy Housing and the Biopolitics of Letchworth Cottages

Beyond the preservation and modernization of the agricultural belt, the problem of the lack of affordable, yet “healthy” housing for local workers and low income families plagued the planning and early years of Letchworth. Garden city leaders and historians have long linked the lack of early housing construction to the company’s inability to raise capital. Because the directors designed the company’s authority so as to restrict the profit margins of building operations through the allocation of shares, First Garden City was initially forced to withhold directing the construction of housing until private industries, building societies, and private individuals failed to meet the demand. The company’s own building committee, established before Unwin and Parker’s community layout, called for the building of

up to twenty cottages, and led to the first group of housing known as “Alpha Cottages,” designed based on the housing model established by Cadbury’s Bournville. Alpha Cottages consisted of middle-class housing with rents out of the reach of low income workers. Before 1905, most constructed cottage houses in Letchworth were built according to standards set by either Unwin and Parkers’ New Earswick plan or the model industrial villages at Bournville and Port Sunlight, leaving the issue of affordable, healthy worker cottages unresolved.³⁵⁰ Purdom called the shortage of capital “[t]he greatest handicap” for the company in terms of housing construction, and alleged that a larger flow of funds “would have produced houses and factories.”³⁵¹ The state of housing, however, was unclear in terms of contemporary newspaper coverage, as some noted that the First Garden City Company was making “rapid progress” in 1904, with cottages “gradually springing up” while “no less than 400 applications” were “received for sites for residences.”³⁵² Nonetheless, residents and observers remarked in the GCA’s *Garden City* magazine that the need affordable working class housing persisted within Letchworth.³⁵³ By 1906, community leader Ralph Neville wrote that it was an enduring problem to have some three hundred laborers working on the estate, yet have no affordable houses for them to let.³⁵⁴ The healthfulness and social regenerative properties of the community project depended on the ability for laborers to afford being able to live within the community they were helping to build.

³⁵⁰ Miller, *Letchworth*, 59-61; Ward, *The Peaceful Path*, 38-39.

³⁵¹ Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 21; Osborn, *Green-Belt Cities*, 59.

³⁵² “The First Garden City,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 1904, 8.

³⁵³ Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 204.

³⁵⁴ “Answer to Correspondent,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 24 December 1904, 423; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 217;

The lack of initial capital impeded not only the construction of houses, but the development and landscaping of The Broadway, the main street of Letchworth intended to link the community's Central Square, where the public buildings and landscaped park space was to be located, and residential areas. This had a felt impact on the politicized relation between prescribed embodied activities and the resultant material layout of the community. The dearth in development funds led Unwin and Parker to allow the adaptation of previous English layouts: the adaptation of "Wren and other masters...to illustrate the layout."³⁵⁵ Scholars continue to debate over determinative role of Austrian architect Camillo Sitte and his Viennese architectural and planning work on Unwin's layout plans, while the separation of the planned business and civic center of Letchworth displayed an embracing of American City Beautiful ideas on the arranging of commerce and civic beauty. In this way, the shortage of capital helped to push the layout of Letchworth towards more dominant and standard British and American suburban plans, stymieing the construction and landscaping of buildings and spaces more attuned to Unwin and Parker's emergent and residual biopolitical ideas.³⁵⁶

The shortage of affordable housing on the estate was exacerbated by the class politics of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker's cottage housing recommendations. Since First Garden City did not exercise control over the architecture of Letchworth, the result was a community of varied dwelling styles and aesthetics, typifying middle and upper-middle class Victorian suburbs of the period.³⁵⁷ As evidenced by their

³⁵⁵ Mervyn Miller, "Letchworth Garden City: An Architectural View," in *Garden Cities and New Towns: Five Lectures* (Lavenham: The Lavenham Press, 1989), 83.

³⁵⁶ Stern, Fishman, and Tilove, *Paradise Planned*, 231-233.

³⁵⁷ Beavers, *Garden City Utopia*, 52; Hall, *Sociable Cities*, 22; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*.

contemporary writings on the subject of housing and health, Unwin and Parker's affinity for architectural and aesthetic ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement led them to accept the naturally healthful qualities of pre-industrial and medieval housing and community arrangements. This was a perspective deeply rooted in middle-class attitudes Victorian towards industrial cities and housing reform. Unwin wrote in *The Art of Building a Home* that "the relations of...separate buildings should be considered" not just to effect a unity (and in his words, a "dignity") in the town's form, but to instill a healthier relation between resident, home, and natural setting: to make village, dwellings, and inhabitants "at home in...country surroundings." This kind of healthier relation, for Unwin, entailed the restoration of pre-industrial social arrangements and conditions for ideal domesticity, as he believed the organic healthfulness of village life cultivated residents who would "accept" and "be content" with their personal and social relations. This approach served to complement dominant English cultural ideas of the need to "protect" the home, and persuade poor families of the need to adjust or improve their behavior and conditions.³⁵⁸ Echoing the medieval romanticism of contemporary architects such as the Austrian Camillo Sitte, Unwin's devotion to seeming "organic unity" of pastoral and medieval village led him to reproduce middle class notions of health and aesthetic beauty through his work.³⁵⁹ More than that, such restored village arrangements would aid in the

³⁵⁸ Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*, 92, 108; George Behlmer, *Friends of the Family: The English Home and Its Guardians, 1850-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

³⁵⁹ For a look at Camillo Sitte's ideas on town planning and architecture, see Camillo Sitte, *The Art of Building Cities: City Building According to Its Artistic Fundamentals*, trans. Charles T. Stewart (New York: Reinhold Publishing, 1945); George R. Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins, *Camillo Sitte and the Birth of Modern City Planning* (New York: Random House, 1965).

amelioration of working class health and politics, for it would provide a livelihood through which they could live with idyllic, pastoral health and contentment.

This approach led Unwin to argue for the necessity, beauty, and healthful attributes of the nostalgically-imbued countryside cottage within town planning. In his 1902 Fabian pamphlet *Cottage Plans and Common Sense*, Unwin detailed his plan for low density housing arrangements he would subsequently recommend in Letchworth. Rather than constructing row houses with backyards—which he found “unsuitable” due their lack of sunlight and propensity to be sites for accumulated litter—Unwin wrote that the “majority of men would accept” the house ideal articulated by John Ruskin: a country cottage, with a little garden, and access to fresh air and sunlight. Such cottages should be planned without parlor rooms, but with the single common rooms to allow for air circulation, ample sunlight, as well as inspire a cozier, nostalgia-laden familial relations. The cottages would be arranged in a quadrangular shape, surrounding a large communal space that would “provide for all sorts of tastes,” such as lawns for bowling, a children’s playground, or a public garden. Unwin’s underlying idea, following the vision of his naturalist and medieval romantic Ruskin, was that such housing arrangements would remedy the dislocation between working class housing and idyllic English pastoral living.³⁶⁰ This was a thoroughly middle and upper class vision of health and nature, and neatly complemented liberal movement supporters who argued that the restoration of English country living would socially and biologically regenerate the urban working

³⁶⁰ Raymond Unwin, *Cottage Plans and Common Sense*, Fabian Tract No. 109, March 1902, Folder 5 – Folder of Unwin's Publications and Articles, Box 2, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL.

class. As garden city historian Stanley Buder explains, through Unwin's advocacy of low density cottage housing arrangements, "British planning emerged with a theory and practice derived in large part from the blending of Howard's vision with the Arts and Crafts movement."³⁶¹ The centerpiece of Unwin's plan, however, was the country cottage, an antimodern housing ideal mobilized by the modern power strategy of biopoliticized town planning. With the cottage in its natural association with undeveloped country spaces and communal gardens, Unwin's plan promised the restoration of pre-industrial social and environmental living arrangements alongside strategies to instill greater co-operation without abandoning the garden city movement's objective of working class regeneration.

The country cottage, as scholar Karen Sayer explains, has long embodied "English national identity and ideal domesticity, representing 'true' femininity as 'natural', domestic (in terms of both domesticity and nationality), white, wise, and thoroughly desirable/pleasurable..." By the Victorian era, it had become ingrained within English national iconography as the mythical modicum of intimate home life and English healthfulness. The ambiguity of its definition and what materially constitutes a cottage—be it any country home or a hovel—has allowed for variability in the myth's articulation, as the multitudinous, contextually-specific imagery and signifiers of the idyllic English retreat become emboldened through invented narratives blurring the boundaries between history, memory, and nostalgia. Those narratives then reproduce a "way the English have used/still use their past to sell themselves," a construction and reproduction of iterations of national identity.

³⁶¹ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 101.

Always set in an envisioned idyllic landscape of the ‘picturesque’ rurality of pre-industrial England—William Blake’s “green & pleasant land”—the cottage was the utopian and planned space through which the Victorian middle class reproduced ideologies of Englishness, rural femininity, and bourgeois domesticity. The imagined bucolic “home” became the nostalgic emblem of lost national health, its imagery employed by middle class reformers to critique the rapid development of the urban industrial centers and emblemize the nostalgic, healthy, domestic backdrop through which British imperial strength emerged. Similar to Ebenezer Howard’s articulation of rural ‘Nature’ as a feminized bosom of health, such discourse enmeshed the country cottage within a feminized iteration of rural landscape and signified the architectural, healthy “Other” in contrast to the culture, power, and unhealthy spaces of the nineteenth-century city.³⁶²

Unwin and Parker’s writings on housing architecture in *The Art of Building a Home and Cottage Plans and Common Sense* guided their subsequent recommendations and housing plans in Letchworth. One notable singular development was “Homesgarth,” a co-operative housing project spearheaded by Unwin and Howard. Promoting his vision of communal working class housing in the *Daily Mail* and GCA publications, Howard raised £5,000 from private sources to finance the construction of a block of communal housing arranged in quadrangles.

³⁶² Sayer, *Country Cottages*, 1-18; Linda M. Austin, *Nostalgia in Transition, 1780-1917* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 125-126; Donna Landry, “Ruined Cottages: The Contradictory Legacy of the Picturesque for England’s Green and Pleasant Land,” in *Green and Pleasant Land: English Culture and the Romantic Countryside*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 1-18. For other histories of the English cottage, see William T. Comstock, *Country Houses and Seaside Cottages of the Victorian Era* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989); R.J. Brown, *The English Country Cottage* (London: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1979); Vanessa Parker, *The English House in the Nineteenth Century* (London: The Historical Association, 1970).

The thirty-two planned apartments were designed as “service flats” so that residents would be forced to eat meals in central kitchens and dining rooms, as well as have access to communal living and recreation facilities. Though not personally planned by Unwin, Homesgarth’s design reflected his earlier sketches of urban quadrangle housing with shared rooms and writings on co-operative housing schemes for workers.³⁶³ Multiple such individual and privately-financed projects emerged in the early years of Letchworth, but the lack of financial stability and haphazard nature of building construction in part caused the community’s wholesale construction to occur gradually through patchwork designs rather than a preconceived layout based on Howard’s *To-morrow*. Moreover, the selection of Unwin and Parker as the company’s consulting architects guaranteed that the issue of housing at Letchworth would be deeply political, culturally complex, and dialectically relation to class tension indicative of the period. The paternalist nature of the venture was not solely created by the planners, as the First Garden City’s prospectus made it clear that not only did Letchworth’s inhabitants have no right to take over the company in future periods of community financial solvency, but that the owners and regulators of the community’s development and design were ultimately the board of directors and members of the company.³⁶⁴

The overt middle class paternalism of Unwin’s housing and architectural recommendations exacerbated class tensions within Letchworth, as local laborers clamored for available, affordable cottages and objected to the higher cost of the

³⁶³ Miller, *Letchworth*, 45, 74; Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 63; “Avoiding a Domestic Hardship,” *Lancashire Evening Post*, 26 November 1910, 6.

³⁶⁴ Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 11-15.

community's aesthetic and architectural regulations. The middle-class social and aesthetic values of the cottages that Unwin and Parker designed caused housing rentals to be too costly for ordinary laborers.³⁶⁵ The planners, for example, stipulated that builders use red tiles for roofing material and banned the use of cheaper gray slates, a material commonly used for roofs in working class communities at the time. During the Victorian period, thousands of roofs were built with Welsh slates throughout Britain, a capitalist break from the traditional use of local materials. Indeed, as R.J. Brown reminded us, the Welsh slate was the predominant roofing material used in Britain during the nineteenth century. Unwin, however, favored the use of the more expensive red clay tiles, presumably as they not only varied in color depending on the local clay material, but exhibit the natural "organic unity" that he believed existed in the "healthier" English and European medieval villages and their architecture. Local laborers and poor residents protested the requirements, arguing that they prevented the cottages from being affordable. Such well-designed cottages were located in areas of the town only middle and upper middle-class residents could afford, while low wage laborers who were working in the town often had to commute from their cheaper accommodations in Hitchin or other vicinities. As a result, Unwin and Parker's aesthetic requirements produced a considerable degree of tension with local workers. Unwin responded to this division in a 1906 lecture to Letchworth residents, arguing that the advantages of the red tiles outweighed their negligible higher costs.³⁶⁶ He believed the health benefits of the architectural aesthetic were

³⁶⁵ "The Cottage Exhibition," *The Morning Post*, 12 September 1905, 5.

³⁶⁶ Brown, *The English Country Cottage*, 210-232; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 72; "Artistic Problems of Garden City," *The Hertfordshire Express and General Advertiser* (Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England), 3 March 1906.

more important than the use of building materials typical of the overcrowded urban environment, and stressed that their value would emerge over time. The episode exhibited the class divisions within a planned community designed to ameliorate class conflict. As C.B. Purdom put it in 1913, “[A]t Garden City we have had a conflict between the architect and builder on the one hand, and the tenant on the other.” The conflict was no less placated by the company’s setup; when people asked at the first conferences held on the estate whether new factory owners would be regulated by First Garden City to provide “fair conditions” to their employees, company leaders responded that the question was a trades union matter, and not one First Garden City could tackle.³⁶⁷

Along with the construction of affordable, yet healthy housing, such paternalism also seeped into question of reforming working class culture within Letchworth. Quickly politicians and social reformers began to use the new garden city estate to assert their initiatives for socially reforming the activities of the working class, holding conferences at Letchworth addressing social topics such as temperance and agricultural holdings.³⁶⁸ In the summer of 1904, Conservative politician Sir John Gorst—would later become chairman of the Letchworth Parish Council—presided over a conference concerning “constructive temperance reform,” with figures such as Seebohm Rowntree and Aneurin Williams present for the discussions.³⁶⁹ The discussions and resolutions centered on whether to advocate the selling of liquor be placed under the discretion of local public trustees, with the intention of a public body

³⁶⁷ “The First Garden City,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 1904, 8; Purdom, *The Garden City*, 155.

³⁶⁸ “A Gleam in the Gloom,” *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1904.

³⁶⁹ Purdom, *Letchworth Achievement*, 112.

regulating local use and restricting excessive consumption. Conference discourse, however, was underpinned by notions of the possibility of working class social reform through the structuring of the environment, and how the Letchworth estate served as an example environment that could quell their immoral activities of urban workers. The degraded conditions of the industrial city exacerbated worker degeneration, Gorst argued: “[T]he greatest temptations to drink in the large towns are bad air and foul surroundings.” This view reinforced the perception of middle and upper class social reformers that Letchworth’s environmental arrangement afforded optimum conditions for health. Letchworth, in other words, would resolve questions of worker immorality through its planned form. As one contemporary newspaper coverage put it, “if [First Garden City Company] succeed in...bringing employment and labour together where both can prosper, while a healthy home life is fostered by the natural influence of agreeable surroundings,” they will have presented a remedy for not only the issue of temperance but the national urban public health crisis.³⁷⁰

By 1905, it was becoming clear that the company would need to solicit help in figuring out how to create affordable, yet healthful cottages for local workers. That year company manager Thomas Adams solicited the help of *Spectator* and *The Country Gentleman* editor J. St. Loe Strachey to promote a Cheap Cottages Exhibition. Builders, architects, and interested observers from across the country were invited to visit the estate and attempt to build a livable cottage for under £150.

³⁷⁰ *The Morning Post*, 1 August 1904, 4; “Constructive Temperance Reform,” *The Daily News* (London), 26 July 1904, 8; “The Garden City. Constructive Temperance Reform,” *Cambridge Independent Press*, 29 July 1904, 7; “Constructive Temperance Reform,” *Gloucester Journal*, 6 August 1904, 2.

In terms of promotion, visitor count and number of built cottages, the exhibition proved a success: over sixty thousand people ventured to an incomplete Letchworth Garden City to witness 121 cottages of various styles, materials and designs. The exhibition, however, exposed the Letchworth project to its vulnerability not only as a private venture within an industrial capitalist economy, but as a middle-class reformist project with an overall ambivalent approach to defining a “healthy” cottage. For Unwin and Parker, the Cheap Cottages Exhibition risked moving the planned community into the unfortunate direction of valuing cost over the reforming of affordable housing designs. Apart from its allusions to Ruskian nostalgic visions of pastoral living, however, Howard’s primary stipulation of healthy housing within a healthier rural environment. Howard, Unwin and others continued to advocate the construction of more communally arranged houses for co-operative living, but the company had little control over the direction of home construction. If in the beginning Letchworth leaders hoped to fulfill the idyllic middle class vision laid out by Ebenezer Howard, by 1905 it were being re-shaped by the forces of the free market and the community’s inability to attract industry into a built environment politically and socially resembling the bourgeois suburban communities of its period.³⁷¹

Garden city leaders would find optimism in the aftereffects of the Cheap Cottage Exhibition, with Purdom retrospectively surmising that “[c]ottage building became...the town’s first great achievement,” for by the end of the exhibition

³⁷¹ Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 105-15; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 86-95; “An Exhibition of Cheap Cottages,” *The Spectator*, 3 December 1904, 24; “The Cheap Cottages Exhibition,” *The Spectator*, 22 July 1905, 8; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 204-5; Purdom, *The Building of Satellite Towns*, 64-7; Miller, *Letchworth*, 62-66.

Letchworth had “shown that reasonably good homes, each with its garden, could be built to let at very low rents.” Ultimately, however, the 1905 exhibition illustrated the difficulty of constructed cottage housing according to middle class, pastorally romantic standards through a private venture and political economy governed by market capitalism. The Cheap Cottage Exhibition, if anything, illuminated a limitations of the planners’ nostalgic paternalist strategies and particular biopolitical planning schemes, for it became increasingly clear to Unwin and others that the originating goal of providing health, well-built, yet affordable housing for workers was becoming lost to the forces of the economy. If the goal was to inspire greater co-operation, contentment, and healthful regeneration amongst the urban working class, the result was a built environment suitable for the reproduction of a dominant cultural habitus: a planned space for the re-articulation of middle class notions of health and livelihood surrounding by a belt of agricultural production.³⁷²

Conclusion

In his retrospective summary of the “achievement” of building Letchworth, C.B. Purdom alluded to a rapid change of leadership on the estate. By 1906, only a few short years since dedication of the Letchworth estate, Ralph Neville left his chairman of First Garden City Company to become a judge, and the estate was placed under the management of northern engineer William Henry Gaunt. Gaunt, according

³⁷² Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 23; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 114-115.

to Purdom, “knew nothing of the garden city and cared less,” choosing not to “hide his contempt for the Spirit of the Place.” With this change of community leadership, multiple supporters of Ebenezer Howard’s ideals, specifically Unwin and the originating Letchworth manager Thomas Adams, left the experiment. Adams went on to become an internationally-renowned town planning expert, while Unwin moved to oversee his planning of Hampstead Garden Suburb under Dame Henrietta Barnett’s authority. In many ways, particularly in terms of its housing designs and architecture, Hampstead Garden Suburb would come to more closely embody the Arts and Crafts ideals Unwin sought to incorporate at Letchworth. Meanwhile, Gaunt would quickly attempt to reverse the healthful planning Unwin recommended for the garden city, fighting hard “to have red roofing tiles banished from the town to be replaced by grey Welsh slates,” ironically the material the local working class pleaded for Unwin to incorporate just a short time previous.³⁷³

Yet, the eugenics and racial nationalist biopolitics of the Letchworth project remained central and integral to the project’s national and international promotion, particularly in Howard’s promotion of the community’s national significance. In a 1910 typescript on “Remedies for Unemployment” for a later lecture to the Co-operative Society in Northamptonshire, Howard linked the national need for “healthy homes” with “healthy surroundings,” declaring, “Millions of our children – the men and women of the future are not born into healthy homes!” This had a significant national and hereditary significance for Howard, as British children needed a “healthy

³⁷³ Purdom, *Letchworth Achievement*, 24-5; Raymond Unwin and M.H. Baillie Scott, *Town Planning and Modern Architecture at the Hampstead Garden Suburb* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909); Mervyn Miller and Alexander Stuart Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1992).

home” next to “healthy parentage” in order to guarantee their “fit for the work of life.” Letchworth Garden City, Howard proclaimed, provided the conditions for a “fit” British race:

Letchworth increases the fitness and ability to do the work, because children born there are better fit physically and mentally, the fields and space to do the work is available, the machinery is becoming available, and the organisation is available...

Combined with related urban reform measures such as compulsory education, national children’s employment committees and the prohibition of children engaging in selling goods on the streets, Letchworth would demonstrably help “train a race strong and healthy in mind and in body, and...fit and capable of doing the work that requires to be done, as no race brought up under present day conditions can possibly be.”³⁷⁴ Following Howard, Letchworth was a spatial harbinger for the racial, biological, and social improvement of the British working class for the betterment of the nation’s imperial might. It was a planned community deeply imbued with the racialized values of imperialism, eugenics, and traditional pastoral values of health and domesticity. The national significance of Letchworth Garden City lay in its contributions to the healthful and physical cultural improvement of the British Empire.

The great British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote, “the ‘garden cities’ and ‘garden suburbs’ designed by socially idealistic (Anglo-Saxon) planners followed a town planning path well-trodden by the middle and upper class suburbs of the

³⁷⁴ Typescript of lecture entitled 'Remedies for Unemployment', Read at Co-operative Society's meeting at Liberty Hall, Kimphorpe, Northamptonshire, Date possibly 1916, 13 December 1910, DE/Ho/F10/20, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS.

period,” resulting in a community whose social opportunities and spatial arrangements exacerbated class divides rather than offering amelioration. Yet, they were more than Richard Sennett’s condescending summation of their qualities: “worthy, healthy, organic” in their reflection of the “deadening” Victorian insistence on “sweetness and light,” and ultimately “boring quasi-suburbs.”³⁷⁵ To equate the English garden city’s historical significance as the manifestation of class aesthetics in form of a “boring” built environment is to miss the complex relations between the community planning and their modern impulse to regulate the interactions between human, health, and environment. The important contradiction between the First Garden City’s intentions and its subsequent results stemmed from the particular nostalgic biopolitics of the chief Letchworth planners and the context’s set of political, economic, and social relations. The work done by Unwin, Parker and others, notably the laying out of cottage housing in low density building arrangements (which became known as the “garden city development”) would become internationally influential through the activities of garden city-related associations and publicized writings such as Unwin’s 1912 *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*³⁷⁶ Yet, by promoting and planning Letchworth as a town form for industrial relocation, the improvement of worker health and occupational efficiency, as well as the reinforcement of nostalgic middle class values of Anglo Saxon beauty, landscape, and architecture, the first garden city experiment, in many ways, maintained and

³⁷⁵ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, 171.

³⁷⁶ Purdom, *The Letchworth Achievement*, 23; Unwin, *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*

reproduced the social and embodied relations of the capitalist mode rather than a “peaceful path to reform.”³⁷⁷

Chapter Four: Regionalist Physical Culture: Wilderness and Recreation in American Garden City Planning

In the 1920s, the American architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright—both members of and associated with the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation—would design and lead the construction of two communities on the eastern seaboard of the United States, planned in accordance to the ideals and

³⁷⁷ E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1975-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 167; Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 32.

principles of the international garden city movement.³⁷⁸ The first community experiment, named Sunnyside Gardens, would be constructed in the Queens Borough of New York City in 1924 on cheap undeveloped land purchased from the Long Island Railroad Company. The second, arguably more well-known development would be built at Radburn, New Jersey in 1929, on the outskirts of New York. In a 1947 retrospective account, Stein wrote that their Sunnyside project “was intended as a step toward the creation of an American Garden City.”³⁷⁹ By the time they began to construct Radburn, Stein and Wright began were putting into operation a plan for a new town, “newer than the garden cities,” that would modernize the principles of the English garden city in order to create communities “for the motor age,” where families could live in a community in a safe, healthy contact with automobile traffic. To use Stein’s own phrase, they sought to create “complete communities,” the wholesale structuring of a community form in order to “enhance living, leisure, and work” within a context of rapidly growing urban consumer capitalism.³⁸⁰ Both were community projects administered by the City Housing Corporation (CHC), a private, limited dividend company founded by the wealthy New York real estate developer Alexander Bing, the creation of Sunnyside and Radburn followed a development course similar to that of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities in the U.K. Using a

³⁷⁸ Both Clarence Stein and Henry Wright’s names appear on the letter heads and letters sent by members of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation, the organization Sir Ebenezer Howard helped found to spur the international promotion of spread garden city principles. These letters can be found in the John Nolen Papers at CURMC.

³⁷⁹ Clarence Stein, “Sunnyside as a Community,” 30-31 August 1947, Folder 9 – Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation), 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, Collection #3600, CURMC.

³⁸⁰ Untitled manuscript by Clarence Stein, Folder 24 – Radburn, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Kristin Larsen, *Community Architect: The Life and Vision of Clarence S. Stein* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 3.

private company financed with private capital and middle and upper middle class support, they sought the creation of planned communities that adhered to the principles spelled out in Sir Ebenezer Howard's *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, yet also to emergent ideals of American planning: communities linked to an entire redeveloped region, where low income Americans could be resettled onto prescribed town spaces ideally suited for cultivation of healthy, efficient bodies, habits, and co-operative, democratic American values.³⁸¹

Yet, these communities did not emerge from a wholly American garden city movement, but one in which planners like Stein and Wright sought to fuse English garden city ideas with emergent ideas of American regional planning. The two men were key members of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), a small group of architects, planners, and social thinkers organized in the 1920s to disseminate and develop garden city and regional planning projects in the United States. These planners, however, were not just influenced by and advocates of English garden city leaders such as Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin. A young, burgeoning intellectual, social thinker and urban historian by the name of Lewis Mumford, the youngest member of the RPAA, was also an acolyte of the regionalist philosophy of the Scottish social biologist Patrick Geddes. Through Geddes, Mumford and the RPAA developed a distinct vision of regional planning

³⁸¹ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 167-170. Alexander Bing was the co-partner of Bing & Bing Properties, one of the "most prolific" real estate developers in New York City in its time and the builders of some of the city's "finest prewar properties." See Eileen A.J. Connelly, "They Built New York: Alexander Bing," *The Real Deal: New York Real Estate News*, 29 October 2015, <https://therealdeal.com/2015/10/29/they-built-new-york-alexander-bing/>; Dee Wedemeyer, "Bing & Bing Sells Off Its Properties," *The New York Times*, 30 June 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/06/30/realestate/bing-bing-sells-off-its-properties.html>.

which involved the creation of a network of garden city community forms, but within a larger framework of natural resource conservation, technological innovation, and the linking of garden cities with “wilderness” hinterlands and its concomitant naturally healthy recreational and physical cultural opportunities. According to historian Daniel Schaffer, the RPAA was “the most important advocacy group for garden city principles” to emerge in the United States in the early twentieth-century, but it would be misleading to frame the RPAA strictly in terms of their garden city advocacy. These Anglo-American men knew, were inspired by, and worked Howard, Unwin, and other prominent leaders of the English garden city movement, but they incorporated the community model within a larger vision of the redeveloping the entire Eastern seaboard of the United States as a way to restore healthier living relations between resident, town, and natural environment.³⁸²

Relating the garden city-inspired town planning of the RPAA to the organization’s overall regionalist vision allows for a more nuanced, focused analysis of the physical cultural and biopolitical prescriptions embedded in the planning of Sunnyside and Radburn. Along with Mumford, Stein and Wright were close

³⁸² Daniel Schaffer, “The American Garden City: Lost Ideals,” in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Stephen V. Ward (New York: E & FN Spon, 1992), 128-129. A major, problematic omission in this chapter is the role and significance of the landscape designer Marjorie Sewell Cautley in the designing of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn landscape. This arose because of multitude of complications, namely the lack of time and funding to study her surviving documents and the need to expand from a prevailing literature that in large part continues to neglect attention to her role in the creation of Sunnyside and Radburn. I have tried, where possible, to include discussion of her role and presence in each community’s planning, and hope to study her available papers when financially possible—I do not want this dissertation to contribute any more to the omitting of Cautley’s significance in garden city history any more than I already have. Scholars have already devoted attention to her work. See Thaisa Way, “Designing Garden City Landscapes: Works by Marjorie L. Sewell Cautley, 1922-1937,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 4 (2012): 297-316; Thaisa Way, *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

associates with fellow RPAA colleague Benton MacKaye, a former forester and conservationist who led the creation of the Appalachian Trail as a major RPAA project during the same decade as City Housing Corporation initiated their community planning experiments.³⁸³ It is through this relation between CHC's modern planning projects and MacKaye and the RPAA's Appalachian Trail project that one finds a biopolitical nostalgia within this emergent context of regional planning. In comparison to the planning of Letchworth Garden City, in which Howard, Unwin and the planners mobilized their romantic, nostalgic, residual visions of pastoral labor when they promoted the "natural healthfulness of the community's preserved agricultural belt, the healthful physical culture of RPAA and CHC planning materialized in two forms: modern, emergent sporting and physical cultural practices within the community form, and nostalgic, residual, yet emergent recreational practices they believed were possible through the conservation of adjacent wilderness spaces. It was through their goal of turning the garden city form into American "regional cities" that could be linked to preserved wilderness hinterlands, through projects such as the Appalachian Trail, that they believed residents would be provided a "naturally healthier" built environment with access to "naturally healthy" wilderness and recreation spaces. Thus, before examining the material contexts of the planning of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, we must first trace the residual and emergent, modern and nostalgic cultural ideas that informed the RPAA's regional planning objectives, and shaped their visions of that the healthfulness of their planned

³⁸³ "Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Regional Planning Association," 20 April 1923, Folder 12 - RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

garden cities depended upon their relation to spaces of conserved and recreational nature: undeveloped “frontier” space necessary for the cultivation of Anglo-American, masculine values and character.

This chapter focuses on the transatlantic transfer of garden city ideals into American regional planning and biopolitical objectives, paying particular attention to the role of the American planners’ constructions and idealizations of health, nature and physical culture that would come to profoundly shape City Housing Corporation’s planning of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn community building projects. Examined surviving documents related to the activities and intentions of the RPAA and Clarence Stein and Henry Wright’s plans for what would later become the communities of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, the chapter traces how the overarching healthful purposes of both communities related to their prominent English predecessor at Letchworth Garden City. In particular, I discuss how the RPAA’s understanding of health in relation to particular environments emerged as a politicized ideology centered on the prescription of particular physical cultural forms and linked community planning with middle and upper class concerns of social, environmental, and physical “efficiency” and improvement. Much like Howard and English garden city leaders, Clarence Stein wrote of the urban “metropolis” as “unhealthy” and “inefficient,” the antithesis of the undeveloped countryside and the result of unchecked capitalist expansion and poor urban planning. He called for sustainable, self-contained communities planned to balance garden and open space, recreation, and the culturally amenities of the city. “It has succeeded at Letchworth,”

Stein wrote, “It can succeed here.”³⁸⁴ The restoration of particular residual, nostalgic forms of physical culture and recreation, arising from people living near wilderness spaces, was central to this overall vision of American regional planning. The goal of this chapter is to relate the vision to its ideational and ideological contexts, teasing out the definitions of nature, health, and physical culture that shaped the form of the RPAA’s planned communities.

International and Intercontinental Garden City Ideals

Ebenezer Howard’s English garden city movement quickly spread internationally following a 1902 second, updated edition of his original *To-morrow* treatise, re-titled *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. By 1912, Howard’s book was published in French, German, and Russian. At the first GCA conferences at Bournville and Port Sunlight, upwards of sixty foreign delegates were in attendance. By the outbreak of the First World War, eleven different countries established their own national garden city associations.³⁸⁵ In 1907, the Japanese Bureau of the Home Ministry published a book titled *Den-en Toshi*, based in part on A.R. Sennett’s 1905 *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* and referencing Howard’s Garden City principles in two of its chapters.³⁸⁶ In 1913, *Garden Cities and Town Planning*

³⁸⁴ Clarence Stein, “Housing IV – Why is Municipal Housing Necessary,” *Women and the City’s Work*, Vol. VI, No. 4, 26 October 1920, Folder 4 – “The Housing Problem,” Box 5, Series 3 – Speeches and Writings, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

³⁸⁵ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 134-135; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 178-179.

³⁸⁶ Shun-ichi Watanabe, “The Japanese Garden City,” in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future* (New York: E & FN Spon, 1992), 70-71; A. R. Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* (London: Bemrose and Sons Ltd, 1905).

Association (the new name for the former GCA) Secretary Ewart Culpin published an update on the movement, documenting the various national garden cities associations established throughout continental Europe.³⁸⁷ According to historian Robert Freestone, by the eve of the First World War practically all of the “civilised world” received the “garden city message”: as just a few notable examples, while Zionist organizations proposed the construction of new town in Palestine based on Howard’s community principles, in Australia the American architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin employed the principles of the garden city and “City Beautiful” movements in designing and laying out of the country’s new capital city at Canberra.³⁸⁸

In the United States, the Christian socialist W.D.P. Bliss and Protestant reformer Josiah Strong helped spur the creation of the short-lived American Garden City Association in 1907, seeing the garden city movement as a useful vehicle for applying their social Darwinist beliefs in Anglo-Saxon supremacy towards urban reform and enhancing capitalist land speculation.³⁸⁹ A prominent leader of the Social Gospel movement and white Christian missionary work during the Progressive Era of American social reform, Strong was the author of the 1885 book *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, arguing that the fate of the Western, industrial

³⁸⁷ Ewart G. Culpin, *The Garden City Movement Up-To-Date* (London: The Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, 1913), 61-68.

³⁸⁸ Robert Freestone, “Canberra as a Garden City 1901-1930,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 19 (1986): 3-20; Yossi Katz and Liora Bigon, “Urban Development and the ‘Garden City’: Examples from Late Ottoman-era Palestine and the late British Mandate,” in *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning: Transnationality and Urban Ideas in Africa and Palestine*, eds. Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz (New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 157; Donald Leslie Johnson, “Walter Burley Griffin: An Expatriate Planner at Canberra,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 5 (1973): 326-336.

³⁸⁹ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 158-159.

world depended upon the Anglo-Saxon race Christianizing and civilizing the “savage” peoples of the world. He proclaimed that Christian, Anglo-Saxon values “will spread itself over the earth,” with the goal of saving “inferior races” through “a ready and pliant assimilation.”³⁹⁰ In 1904, Strong spoke at the International Garden City Congress in London, warning the audience that the fate of the Western world depended on the decentralization of cities, the restriction of urban growth, and the resettling of urban dwellers to countryside. Later that year, Strong helped the English Garden City Association with their display of garden city plans at the St. Louis World’s Fair.³⁹¹ The next year, as part of assignment for the Department of Commerce and Labor, Strong had Bliss travel to Europe to study unemployment-relief programs. This included a visit to Letchworth to meet with British Garden City Association leaders. As the American Garden City Association’s secretary, Bliss argued American housing and social reform depended upon the integration of individualist values with socialist aims. The association, however, largely composed of civic and business leaders, dedicated itself to the endorsement and encouragement of paternalistic industrial housing and model village schemes, causing labor leaders and critics to critique the new organization’s ties to land boosters and speculators. Though the nation’s 1907 financial panic spelled the quick demise of the first

³⁹⁰ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Company for the American Home Missionary Society, 1885), 175. For a good history of the Social Gospel movement, see Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

³⁹¹ Racial and imperial ideologies, in tandem with displays related to sport and physical culture, were a key element of the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. For insightful historical accounts of the fair, see James Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Susan Brownell, *The 1904 Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: Sport, Race, and American Imperialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

association for garden city promotion in America, their short-lived activities showcased the community model's compatibility with American imperialist and Christian missionary efforts, as well as the paternalist community schemes of corporations such as Pullman.³⁹²

Back in England, visitors from a multitude of countries came to observe and learn from the Letchworth experiment during its early years, testifying to the First Garden City's accomplishment in transforming Howard's ideals into a material exemplar.³⁹³ The spreading of garden city associations and societies across the world, along with an increase in inquiries to the London-based GCA for information and assistance regarding establishing other communities abroad, led Howard and movement leaders to formally create an International Garden Cities Association (IGCA) in 1912. The dissemination of ideas throughout Europe caused the IGCA to be associated with cooperative movements, at the time characteristically middle-class and divergent from the Marxist leanings of workers parties and trade union organizations. In part due to its general focus on all things related to the unchecked growth of urban centers and issues of health and housing, the international promotion of garden cities produced a degree of contrast as to the character the movement took hold within each nation. Undoubtedly, as Stanley Buder explained, "[i]nternational discussion of urban affairs flourished in an atmosphere of good will." The generalized nature of movement ideals, however, led to the movement embraces themes divergent or contradictory to the English, Letchworth model, and spurred

³⁹² Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 158-159.

³⁹³ "Stirring Times at Letchworth," *The Hertfordshire Express*, 22 August 1931, Garden City Collection, GCCSC.

concerns amongst those on the left that garden cities were a paternalist strategy designed to buttress industrial capitalism.³⁹⁴

The generalized, ambiguous form of international garden city ideals, combined with their underlying relation to idealizations of embodiment and nostalgia for particularly agrarian spaces resulted in their compatibility within the eugenics movements of foreign town planning programs, as well as their application in colonial planning strategies in African and Asian countries. As Gerhard Fehl explained, Howard's original diagrams were "well received by the urban professionals and planners and conservative politicians" within countries such as Germany "who wished to restore a more traditional quasi-medieval society." This gelled with the aesthetic values of Raymond Unwin's garden city designs and writings, which drew in part from his admiration for the organic healthfulness of medieval German villages and architecture.³⁹⁵ The ideals represented a path to inducing a more "organically ordered" society in line with the eugenics beliefs of many of the German town planners of the 1910s and 1920s, particularly those with the German garden cities organizations. Emphasizing the decentralization of working class populations and the conditions for ideal health, garden cities were subsequently mobilized within German racial hygiene and Nazi planning projects. The eugenics and racial hygiene of German garden city application did not represent a complete divorce from the English movement's original intentions, as Wolfgang Voigt had documented the eugenics aspects of Howard's "Social City" diagram in *To-*

³⁹⁴ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 133-138.

³⁹⁵ Gerhard Fehl, "The Nazi Garden City," in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Stephen V. Ward (New York: E & FN Spon, 1992), 88-91; "Notes at Random" from Arthur Geddes, Edinburgh, 1915-1930, Folder 5 – Personal Papers 4, Box 1, Sir Raymond Unwin Papers, TJRL.

morrow.³⁹⁶ Moreover, the underlying imperial nature of Howard's garden city mission led to the creation of low-density residential projects with adjacent park space in Anglophone and Francophone colonies.³⁹⁷ The international dissemination of garden city principles as general, emergent ideas of urban planning reform led to their absorption within the social logic of the industrial capitalist mode, and problematically allowed their utility as strategies for projects in eugenics, racial nationalist endeavors, and colonial residential forms.

This international promotion of garden cities and town planning principles emerged in a cultural milieu of transatlantic and intercontinental discourse, as middle and upper class Anglo-American reformers exchanged ideas and approaches for confronting common problems of urban development, housing shortages, and the unhealthy living conditions of workers. Historian Daniel Rodgers conceptualized the Atlantic as a seaway, through which Progressive Era international cultural circulation between British, European and American reformers advanced social reform policies and spurred a widespread consideration of the social, economic, political, and cultural effects of industrial capitalism.³⁹⁸ Organized sporting, athletic, and recreational practices were a key element of this Victorian cultural exchange, as British and

³⁹⁶ Voigt, "The Garden City as Eugenic Utopia," 295; Currell, "Breeding Better Babies in the Eugenic Garden City," 267-290.

³⁹⁷ Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 10-11; Bigon, "Garden Cities in Colonial Africa," 477; Bigon and Katz, eds., *Garden Cities and Colonial Planning*.

³⁹⁸ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998). See also James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For sources on the historical processes related to the Transatlantic exchange of cultural ideas, values and knowledge, see Daniel T. Rodgers, Bhavani Rhaman, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Cultures in Motion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It's So French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 3-4.

American sports, and their embedded notions of imperialism, gender expectations, class and race restrictions, were transmitted between the nations.³⁹⁹ The intercontinental cultural circulation of ideas permeated the international garden city movement: the presence of many international organizations dedicated to the spreading and promoting of garden city and town planning ideas indicated a period of what Anthony Sutcliffe called “creative internationalism,” fueled by like-minded architects, planners and reformers seeking to remedy the health and development concerns of their major urban centers.⁴⁰⁰ The surviving documents of American architects Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and John Nolen exhibited this spirit of creative internationalism, with numerous letters and memos from members of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation—the post-First World War iteration of the IGCA—discussing movement and planning ideas and principles.⁴⁰¹

The United States of America, however, was arguably the nation outside of Britain that most interested Howard, for reasons that suggest his vision’s harmonization with the RPAA’s subsequent fondness for the physical cultural healthfulness of wilderness of “frontier” spaces. Howard’s own life experiences led

³⁹⁹ Roberta J. Park, “Sport, Gender and Society in a Transatlantic Victorian Perspective,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 12 (2007): 1570-1603; Gertrud Pfister, ed., *Gymnastics, A TransAtlantic Movement: From Europe to America* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Aviston Downes, “From Boys to Men: Colonial Education, Cricket and Masculinity in the Caribbean, 1870-c.1920,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 1 (2005): 3-21; Patricia Vertinsky, “Transatlantic Traffic in Expressive Movement: From Delsarte and Dalcroze to Margaret H'Doubler and Rudolf Laban,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 13 (2009): 2031-2051.

⁴⁰⁰ Anthony Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States, and France, 1780-1914* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981), 176; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 179.

⁴⁰¹ See, as examples, the letters between John Nolen and Federation Secretary C.B. Purdom, dated February 9, 1925 and March 4, 1925, respectfully. These can be found in Folder 3 – “International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, Garden Cities and Town Planning,” Box 70, Series 4, John Nolen Papers, CURMC; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 142-145.

him to believe that, as Stanley Buder put it, “Americans possessed the resources and inclinations for bold undertakings.” Historians argue that Howard was drawn to the United States by the seeming “openness of its society,” and became convinced that the nation would quickly be an international leader in the construction of garden cities. Multiple American reformers and figures were key sources of influence for Howard—Cora Richmond’s Spiritualist doctrine, Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*, and Henry George’s writings on land reform, to name a few—and his original diagram of the Garden City as entailed a series of concentric circles revealed a closer conceptual affinity with modern American and spiritualist ideas rather than the traditional, architecturally organic English and European village form.⁴⁰² Further, key elements of American pastoral and frontier mythology surface in the historiography as well as his surviving documents. Garden city historians note his failed attempt at homesteading in Nebraska in the early 1870s, and how the venture led him to appreciate the value of open spaces and a gave him a sense of purpose regarding land reform. The purported importance of the Nebraska episode led an American architectural firm to later assert that Howard developed his Garden City ideal from his brief experience of open prairie spaces.⁴⁰³ Even the famous frontier figure Buffalo Bill Cody, whose popular wild west shows were integral in the public refashioning of frontier notions of Anglo-American masculinity for a post-frontier, urban American society. Buffalo Bill appears in Howard’s own retrospective

⁴⁰² Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, ix, 157-8; Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, 55-56; Hall, *Sociable Cities*, 3-5.

⁴⁰³ Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 4-6; Kargon and Molella, *Invented Edens*, 7; “Work on Nebraska Farm Led to ‘Garden City’ Planning Concept,” *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 25 October 1959, 8B, Folder 9 - I.B. The Radburn Idea, Cities To Come, Box 10, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

biographical notes, telling how he met Cody on a steam ferry on the Missouri River, and how he “was much interested in my rifle...I was much struck with his Winchester rifle...”⁴⁰⁴ Regardless of the significance of Howard’s Buffalo Bill anecdote, such historical evidence help explain the central location of the United States in Ebenezer Howard’s vision for the garden city movement, making it an key site for examining the international circulation of garden city ideals as they were promoted as biopolitical strategies in town planning clothing.

Health, Housing, and Recreation

Garden city historians and scholars have long examined the roles of Sunnyside and Radburn as American community projects that illustrated the introduction and relevance of garden city principles within American contexts of town and regional planning. The planning of both communities, indeed, represents an important context in the transcontinental exchange of planning strategies within the international garden city movement.⁴⁰⁵ We must also understand, however, that

⁴⁰⁴ Typescript of brief biographical notes, folder labeled as "Anecdotes by Ebenezer," DE/Ho/F17/5, Sir Ebenezer Howard Papers, HALS. For histories on Buffalo Bill Cody and his “Wild West” shows, see Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill’s America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005); Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

⁴⁰⁵ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 165-173; Robert B. Hudson, *Radburn: A Plan for Living* (New York: American Association for Adult Education 1934); Carol A. Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 55-70; Kargon and Mollala, *Invented Edens*, 20-24; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 49, 204; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 300-309; Kermit C. Parson, “British and American Community Design: Clarence Stein’s Manhattan Transfer, 1924-1974,” in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 131-158; Daniel Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America: The Radburn Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Schaffer, “The American Garden City,” 127-145.

Sunnyside and Radburn were shaped by particular biopolitical definitions and discourses of health, nature, and embodiment that arose from a complicated cultural milieu of American ideas concerning urban reform, wilderness and “frontier” spaces, and their relation to the cultivation of healthier urban bodies. We can witness this intercontinental shift in conceptions of nature and health by considering the significance of recreation, sport and “healthy” body practices in American garden city planning discourse. Raymond Unwin himself, as early as 1922, spoke at an October 9th Boston Society of Landscape Architects dinner on the key differences separating American planning from their English counterparts. He espoused the importance of affordable, well-built housing and the priority of addressing urban congestion in their urban reform efforts. He argued that, however, American town planning tended to focus either on structuring spaces for recreation, leisure, and modern physical cultural practices—parks, playgrounds, hiking trails and recreation fields—or the residential systems of the wealthy. Only the full-scale decentralization of workers and industry onto garden cities and satellite communities, Unwin said, offered a means of relieving urban congestion and providing healthier homes for workers. Invoking the paternalist, biopolitical rhetoric reminiscent in Letchworth’s planning, Unwin told the crowd of landscape architects, “We can’t afford to have our people living in herds,” for such urban congestion “causes the general character of the people to deteriorate.”⁴⁰⁶ The bucolic, pre-industrial romanticism of English garden cities was transformed in an early twentieth-century American context of frontier romanticism.

⁴⁰⁶ “Boston Landscape Architects for Decentralization of Cities,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 October, 1922, Folder 38 - Unwin, Raymond, 1922-1937, Box 8, Series 4, John Nolen Papers, Collection #2903, Cornell University Rare and Manuscript Collections (hereafter referred to as CURMC), Ithaca, New York.

It was in this context that modern physical cultural and recreation practices were mobilized as a healthy salve for the urban capitalist condition through the reforming of embodied subjectivities.

English garden city ideals entered the United States via a productive transatlantic network of town and regional planners who exchanged vital knowledge on planning, urban reform, and healthy living. Often these planners met and talked during international conferences convened on the subject of garden cities and town planning. One of these major American conferences occurred in May of 1911, with Letchworth manager Thomas Adams and chief planner Raymond Unwin traveling overseas to Philadelphia for the Third National Conference on City Planning. The conference attendees included many of the notable figures that would become intimately involved in the planning of suburban garden cities and greenbelt projects in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, including Henry Morgenthau, who would later be Secretary of the Treasury under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn planner Henry Wright, and American Society for Landscape Architects fellow John Nolen. Other prominent leaders in American civic planning, notably Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., also attended and spoke at the conference. The conference gave Unwin a useful opportunity to reiterate some of the successful features of Letchworth's plan, specifically their ability to arrange low-density cottage housing so as to preserve ample adjacent open space and grounds for recreation than are available in the major industrial cities. In general, however, the planning speeches at the conference indicated that such garden city ideals and accomplishments were being absorbed within a national discourse on city planning

derived from similar civic improvement movements such as City Beautiful projects. This was a discourse that continued to relate questions of health with proper community arrangements, but also more explicitly linked city planning strategies with, as Olmsted, Jr. put it, the administering and “policing of municipal settlements and their suburbs.”⁴⁰⁷ British and American town planning, during the early years of the garden city movement, were attempts to designing built environments that would serve as self-regulating conditions for the purposes of socially engineering residents.

At the 1922 Boston Society for Landscape Architects dinner, Raymond Unwin alluded to a shift in practical methodology as he addressed supposed differences between British and American town planning. He argued that American town planning methods in the 1920s tended to emphasize the need for playgrounds, parks, and recreation spaces, which he juxtaposed to what he believed was the British tendency to prioritize housing demands, specifically developing after the First World War. By the 1922, Unwin was serving as Chief Housing Architect for the British government’s newly formed Ministry of Health, created in part to help deal with the acute war-time housing deficit and need for affordable working class dwellings. He played a pivotal role as a member of the Tudor Walters Committee, which comprehensively reported the state of working class housing in Britain and outlined the standards of housing that would come to influence later twentieth-century council housing construction. The *Tudor Walters Report*, published in October 1918 just before the November Armistice, confirmed the influence of garden city and Arts and

⁴⁰⁷ *Proceedings of the Third National Conference on City Planning* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1911), Hathi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009967244>; “For Cities Beautiful,” *The Sun* (Baltimore), 16 May 1911, 13; “City Planners Request Aid,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 May 1911, 10.

Crafts housing standards Unwin repeated in his pamphlets *Cottage Plans and Common Sense* and *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!* The *Report* reinforced Unwin's recommendations for low density housing arrangements—limiting the number of houses per acre to fixed rates in urban and rural settings, and grouping houses around a common or village green—but in relation to improved dwelling standards, incorporated elements of local natural landscape and beauty, and particularly access to garden space as well as social, cultural, and recreational activities. Local councils were not encouraged to build complete garden city and satellite communities, but to acquire suburban land for the construction of simplified schemes by housing societies and manufacturers, an approach that would shadow subsequently garden city developments in the United States.⁴⁰⁸ Healthy physical culture remedies were linked to standards of housing and relation of green and open spaces to housing arrangements.

Unwin's heuristic binary, however, masked important intersections between British and American town planning, particularly in how both groups conceptualized health and the healthy body's relation to particular constructions of ideal architecture, preserved park and "natural" landscape, and how this impact their structuring of physical cultural and recreational spaces within the built community form. It was Unwin who wrote in his 1912 *Nothing Gained* pamphlet of the desirability of suburbs planned according to garden city standards and to include "at least sufficient open ground to provide for fresh air, recreation and contact with growing nature."

⁴⁰⁸ Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 161-170; "Housing Problem," *The Motherwell Times*, 9 August 1918, 7; "Housing and Health," *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 21 October 1918, 4.

Physical culture, leisure, and embodied interactions with natural environments were central to Unwin's conception of the garden city movement's objective in defining "the proper relation and proportion between urban and rural areas...within...urban areas...the relation and proportion between the buildings themselves and the ground surrounding them..." The "proper relation" depended upon the planner's conception and idealization of health, and as discussed in chapter three, in the planning of Letchworth, healthful embodied depended in part on access to spaces of pastoral labor and leisure.⁴⁰⁹ Unwin's reference to American town planning's focus on recreation arguably derived in part from the prevalence of Gilded Age and Progressive Era resorts—such as Asbury Park, New Jersey—communities designed for the reproduction of middle class values of leisure. These were planned communities prescribed with a class-bounded social purpose: to provide idyllic spaces, usually juxtaposed to intriguing natural formations such as ocean beaches or mountains, where middle and upper-middle class families could enjoy healthful recreational pursuits in a controlled, quiet setting.⁴¹⁰ Within the major cities, reformers sought the construction of park, playground, and recreational facilities for the regenerating of urban youth bodies, spatializing middle class notions of nature, health and organized physical activity within the urban environment.⁴¹¹ By the first

⁴⁰⁹ Unwin, *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*, 2-3.

⁴¹⁰ Kathryn Grover, ed. *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); Charles E. Funnell, *By the Beautiful Sea: The Rise and High Times of that Great American Resort, Atlantic City* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Bryant Franklin Tolles, *Summer Cottages in the White Mountains: The Architecture of Leisure and Recreation, 1870-1930* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000); David Richards, *Poland Spring: A Tale of the Gilded Age, 1860-1900* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

⁴¹¹ Elizabeth A. Gagen, "Making America Flesh: Physicality and Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Physical Education Reform," *Cultural Geographies* 11 (2004): 417-442; Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982); Joe L. Frost, *A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Towards a Contemporary*

decades of the twentieth century, middle and upper-middle class urban reformers of the City Beautiful movement constructed civic art projects across the country, reconstructing urban spaces according to bourgeois taste and values of nature and space, with ample park and green spaces, landscaped boulevard systems, and architecturally grandiose public buildings.⁴¹² All of this occurred within a historical context in which Anglo-American anxieties about the state of white masculinity in a post-frontier, urbanized society led to a refashioning of manliness within structured, commercial physical cultural practices and representations.⁴¹³ While an inaccurate comparison of British and American town planning methods, Unwin nonetheless made an important contribution at the 1922 dinner as to the increasing importance of structured recreation and leisure spaces within twentieth-century American town planning programs.

Undoubtedly, part of Unwin's perception also stemmed from his own professional relationships and contact with American planners. Unwin was close friends and colleagues, for example, with the Boston-based landscape architect and society chairman John Nolen, who argued the need for prescribed recreational spaces

Child-Saving Movement (New York: Routledge, 2010); Roberta J. Park, "Boys' clubs are better than policemen's clubs: endeavours by philanthropists, social reformers, and others to prevent juvenile crime, the late 1800s to 1917," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6 (2007): 749-775; Roberta J. Park, "Setting the Scene – Bridging the Gap between Knowledge and Practice: When Americans Really Built Programmes to Foster Healthy Lifestyles, 1918–1940," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 11 (2008): 1427-1452.

⁴¹² William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). Historians often link the emergence of City Beautiful civic art projects with the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁴¹³ Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*; John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Athena Devlin, *Between Profits and Primitivism: Shaping White Middle-Class Masculinity in the U.S., 1880-1917* (New York: Routledge, 2012); David M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

at the First National Conference on City Planning in 1909. A graduate of Harvard University's School of Landscape Architecture and student under the tutelage of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., by the 1920s Nolen was considered one of the most prolific city planners in the United States. His designing of the model town at Mariemont, Ohio—in its practical realization, a bastion of White, middle class living—is often considered the first planning experiment in the “Americanization” of English garden city principles: utilizing garden city provisions for open spaces, eclectic dwelling architecture, and a comprehensive plan for an entire town to address issues of suburban and regional growth.⁴¹⁴ In a conference speech titled, “What is needed in American City Planning?” Nolen argued that American cities needed more planned spaces for “democratic” recreation, in tandem with measures to make cities socially and spatially healthier, efficient and aesthetically unique in beauty and character. While Germany for decades planned “facilities for whole physical exercise,” natural and civic beauty, Nolen claimed, the United States needed to work for “a wider democracy of recreation” and access to forms of civic beauty and pleasure “which feed and refresh the soul as bread does the body”. The importance of city beautification projects—“fine city streets...truly beautiful public buildings...open green squares and plazas...ample playgrounds...numerous parks...theaters, opera houses, and concert halls”—lay not only in the welfare of city inhabitants but the need to make the city itself a healthy, more efficient (economically

⁴¹⁴ Bradley D. Cross, “‘On a Business Bases’: an American Garden City,” *Planning Perspectives* 1 (2004): 57-77; Stephenson, “The Roots of New Urbanism,” 99-123; John Nolen, *New Towns for Old: Achievements in Civic Improvement in some American Small Towns and Neighborhoods*, ed. Charles D. Warren (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005).

and in terms of providing healthier spaces for more efficient work) place to live.⁴¹⁵ During the course of his life, Nolen was a long-time supporter of the garden city movement and an active participant within the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation, having been inspired to pursue town planning after a 1906 visit to Letchworth Garden City.⁴¹⁶ His 1909 speech, however, illustrated not only how American planners linked spaces for recreation with questions of improving the health and efficiency of cities, but the complex relations between American city planning, dominant strategies of scientific management, and residual American democratic values.⁴¹⁷

Regardless of whether planners' prioritized housing or recreation in their approach to improving health through town planning, what appears in the history is an underlying sense of eugenics and environmental determinism with the American appropriation of garden city ideals, laying the groundwork for the spatialization of an American garden city biopolitics. In 1910, prominent American Chemist Ellen Richards defined "eugenics" as the environment complement to eugenics: "[T]he betterment of living conditions, through conscious endeavor, for the purpose of

⁴¹⁵ John Nolen, "What is needed in American City Planning?" *Proceedings of the First National Conference on City Planning*, May 21-22, 1909 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1967), 74-75, Hathi Trust Digital Library, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101075978229;view=1up;seq=8>.

⁴¹⁶ R. Bruce Stephenson, *John Nolen: Landscape Architect and City Planner* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 3. Numerous letters of correspondence, discussing professional planning projects, as well as personal letters discussing visits and family, are housed in Nolen's papers at Cornell University. See, as just one example, Folder 37 - Unwin, Raymond, 1920-1922, Box 8, Series 4, John Nolen Papers, CURMC.

⁴¹⁷ Hugh G.J. Aitkin, *Scientific Management in Action: Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal, 1908-1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). Taylorist scientific management principles were critiqued by Harry Braverman in his landmark *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. See Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

securing efficient human beings,” an “immediate” means of dealing with “race improvement through environment” and contemporary notions of racial hygiene. This was a context in which eugenics ideology pervaded not only research fields steeped in scientific racism, such as craniometry, but shaped public policy, such as immigration legislation in order to preserve and improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the national workforce. A eugenics-driven environment, in this American context, would be imbued with democratic ideals, utilizing advancements in sanitary science to educate and improve people’s health and, thus, create economic value and efficiency through the prevention of disease and “needless deaths.”⁴¹⁸ Through such measures, the built environment would be socially, architecturally, epidemiologically, and racially healthier. As historian Susan Currell explains, eugenic thought permeated modern American popular culture and science discourse in the early 1900s, bolstering national fears of physical and racial decline, male passivity, and concerns of racial infertility.⁴¹⁹ While garden city movement planners (with the exception of Ebenezer Howard through his visual diagrams in *To-morrow*) seldom advocated explicit eugenics doctrine in their writings and designs, a eugenics-driven environmental determinism in part powered their planning intentions. Unwin philosophically mused in his 1909 text *Town Planning in Practice* that the aims of town planning should be the creation of cities which “express the

⁴¹⁸ Ellen H. Richards, *Euthenics, The Science of Controllable Environment* (Boston: Whitcomb & Barrows, 1910), vii-ix, 1-5; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996); Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁴¹⁹ Susan Currell, “Introduction,” in *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*, eds. Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 1-5.

common life and stimulate its inhabitants in their pursuit of the noble end.”

Irrespective of Unwin’s specific political and social ideals, his town approach made clear the “art of city building,” if it expressed an environmentally and architecturally organic sense of “common life,” would determine, aye, improve the health of its residents.⁴²⁰ This sense of town planning would permeate the garden city plans at Sunnyside and Radburn, as the planners sought to construct the ideal, modern conditions for dominant capitalist forms of social and physical health.⁴²¹

The Healthy Bodies of the Regional Planning Association of America

Latent notions of social and spatial eugenics permeated early American garden city planning through the stated aims and resultant communities of Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and their colleagues in the Regional Planning Association of America, as they advocated planning environments for improved social and living arrangements. Stein, in particular, thought of himself as a “community architect,” tasked with utilizing the principles of the garden city and the regionalist ideas of the

⁴²⁰ Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice, an Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 10-12; Miller, *Raymond Unwin*, 106-108.

⁴²¹ A key archival document led me to believe in the primacy of eugenics as an underlying, environmental determinist strategy of American garden city planning. In the papers of landscape architect John Nolen, I found a single document in which Nolen typed “Eugenics as a New Name for Town Planning – Definitions.” The document consisted only of the American Illustrated Medical Dictionary’s definition of the term: “Eugenics is the science and art of improving the human race by securing the best external influences and environmental conditions for the physical, mental and moral development of the individual and the maintenance of health and vigor.” Though I have little inkling of the document’s provenance, its presence leads me to believe that the planners were in some way acquainted with eugenics and, by association, the relation between town planning and eugenics. See “Eugenics as a New Name for Town Planning – Definitions,” Folder 3 – “International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, Garden Cities and Town Planning,” Box 70, Series 4, John Nolen Papers, CURMC.

RPAA towards creating the optimal built environments for community co-operation, social betterment, and healthy lifestyles.⁴²² I do not mean to say that Stein and the RPAA were self-avowed disciples of eugenics doctrine, as I have yet to come across explicit historical documents testifying to that effect. What I am saying here is that Stein, Wright went on to promote the creation of American garden cities as a healthier form of built environment in contrast to the twentieth-century urban metropolis, and through this objective deployed a biopolitical, environmental determinist strategy of constructing and structuring new communities in such a way as to foster ideal healthy lifestyles, recreation and leisure practices, and social interactions. These American planners decentered English garden city principles by calling for the integration of garden cities within a regionalist approach to planning, equating community healthfulness with access to not only modern, bourgeois recreational and physical cultural practices, and a balanced, adjacent, mindful relation with recreational “wilderness” spaces.⁴²³ Their first garden city project at Sunnyside Gardens was constructed during a 1920s American cultural milieu in which evolutionary and eugenics thought penetrated popular culture, with industrial streamline designers and middle and upper class whites obsessed over ways to make American bodies more “efficient,” “hygienic,” and in line with eugenicist conceptions of a corporeal “ideal type”.⁴²⁴ At Sunnyside Gardens, the community was to be “efficient” because it would enhance the conduct of business by making residents

⁴²² Larsen, *Community Architect*, 3.

⁴²³ Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*, 163; Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), xv-xvii.

⁴²⁴ Cogdell, *Eugenic Design*, 4-5. For a history of American eugenic thought, see Marouf A. Hasian, Jr., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

healthier, more co-operative, and liberated from excessive, congested commuting. The green and open spaces of the Sunnyside built environment, a practical realization of the planners' "Turnerian" nostalgia for the natural healthfulness of wilderness spaces, would work in tandem with modern housing and architecture to inspire healthier, happier, and more efficient residents.⁴²⁵

This American approach to planning garden cities was arguably best exemplified through the ideas and activities of the RPAA, as the small group of architects, planners and urban reformers organized as the American corollary of the international garden city movement. As Daniel Schaffer explains, the planners and social thinkers of the RPAA, though organizationally lasting for only a decade and amounting to little more "than a group of close friends who shared ideas on land use and planning," are now retrospectively viewed as "one of the most innovative planning groups in American history" in part due to their engagement, refashioning and application of garden city principles in the early twentieth century.⁴²⁶ Primarily spearheaded by the young cultural and urban writer Lewis Mumford, New York architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, conservationist Benton MacKaye, and New York real estate developer Alexander Bing, the RPAA began as an organization of professional middle and upper class Anglo-American men who were closely acquainted and associated with the prominent figures of the English garden city movement. This particularly including Howard and Raymond Unwin—whom Clarence Stein and Henry Wright personally met when they visited Letchworth and

⁴²⁵ "The Regional Planning Association of America," Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 8, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁴²⁶ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 165-167; Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 10-11.

Hampstead Garden Suburb in 1924—but also Thomas Adams, former manager of Letchworth Garden City and then director of the Russell Sage Foundation’s Regional Plan of New York, as well as C.B. Purdom, a prominent director within First Garden City Company who by then was also the treasurer of the International Garden Cities & Town Planning Federation.⁴²⁷ Indeed, it was within this milieu of transatlantic professional and social exchange that English garden city ideals began to permeate early twentieth-century American regional planning. In their later 1927 *Expert Opinion* pamphlet promoting Sunnyside, City Housing Corporation quoted Raymond Unwin, who remarked, “The next time the pleasure of a visit to America comes my way I shall hope to find that you have been able to assay a still larger, more complete venture, a self-contained satellite community or garden city.”⁴²⁸ From the founding of Letchworth through the construction of Radburn in 1929, garden city communities were developed in the United States in part through the professional and close personal relationships American planners and architects cultivated with the likes of Howard, Unwin and Adams over on the English side of the movement.⁴²⁹

The white male professionals of the RPAA met in March of 1923 to discuss the formation of an organization dedicated to the improvement of “living and working conditions through comprehensive planning of regions including urban and rural

⁴²⁷ Robert Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Eutopian Theories for Architecture and Urban Planning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 117; Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 49.

⁴²⁸ *Expert Opinion*, City Housing Corporation, December 1927, Folder 10 – Sunnyside, Queens, 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁴²⁹ Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*, 163.

communities...”⁴³⁰ They initially proposed to call themselves the “Garden City and Regional Planning Association of America,” the United States affiliate of Ebenezer Howard’s International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation, their endorsed principles being the creation of communities that could “provide housing for workers,” planned social and spatial arrangements in order to “liberate” residential communities “from the domain of profit making.” The planning ideas of the RPAA constituted a culturally emergent formation, in that they did not seek to promote living arrangements and create communities that were completely inimical to the social relations of the capitalist political economy, but rather communities more “humane”: they sought “decent living” for workers so as to relieve them from urban congestion and exhausting commutes, alleviate the cost of industries in terms of their output of housing to workers, and solve the problem of accessible, healthful leisure within a refashioning of the urban landscape.⁴³¹

Within a month of their initial christening, the group of planners and social thinkers decided to rename their organization the “Regional Planning Association of America,” tasked with promoting the “planning and development of better communities as a whole, which for the time being are referred to as garden cities.” The “present lack of system in developing American cities,” the RPAA founding members alleged, “has congested living places and placed a heavy burden on the

⁴³⁰ A few years after the RPAA’s founding, city planner Catherine Bauer Wurster would join the organization. See H. Peter Oberlander, Eva Newbrun, and Martin Meyerson, *Houser: The Life and Work of Catherine Bauer* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

⁴³¹ Miller, *Hampstead Garden Suburb*; Maurice De Soissons, *Welwyn Garden City: A Town Designed for Healthy Living* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); “Proposed Garden City and Regional Planning Association,” Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 8, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Kermit C. Parsons, “Collaborative Genius, The Regional Planning Association of America,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 4 (1994): 462-482.

community both in the carrying on of work and recreation.” Stein, Wright, MacKaye, Mumford, Bing, and the other men dedicated their new organization to the development of a “regional plan” for “new population centers, where natural resources will be preserved for the community, where industry may be conducted efficiently...where an adequate equipment of houses, gardens, and recreation grounds will ensure a healthy and stimulating environment.” In advocating the planning of communities that could provide better homes, open and green spaces, recreation, and a more “stimulating” environment for workers than that offered in the congested cities—and as a result creating a more “efficient” environment (better, healthier workers) and reducing factory costs for industrialists—the RPAA remained firmly entrenched within the principles and tradition established by the English garden city at Letchworth. Mumford wrote in his 1925 essay “Regions – To Live In” that the garden city movement represented a rightful movement towards “a higher type of civilization than that which has created our present congested centers,” and maintained that garden cities accurately “summed up” the intentions of regional planning.⁴³²

Even after renaming their organization the RPAA, their central objective remained the planning and development of better communities as a whole, which for the time being are referred to as garden cities.” Yet, their emphasis on the planning of entire “regions” to carry out the objectives of the garden city movement, rather than planned “Town-Country Magnets” or satellite communities as in Britain,

⁴³² Lewis Mumford, “Regions – To Live In,” *The Survey*, 1 May 1925, 151-152; Lewis Mumford, “The Regional Framework of Civilization,” in *The Lewis Mumford Reader*, ed. Donald L. Miller (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 207-211.

signified a shift in the planners' understandings of industrial modernity, technology, and their nostalgia for people's past relations with natural environments. Their initial plans, following these first formal meetings (often in Clarence Stein's or another's office in New York), were to cooperate with Sir Patrick Geddes of Edinburgh, get in touch with regional planning groups in Great Britain and the other countries with whom he is connected, and develop American regional planning "in harmony, as far as possible, with the most advanced thought in such countries." The task of building new garden cities remained a key component of the RPAA's general aims, but within a complete regional plan designed to balance cities with the healthful attributes of regional ecosystems and relieve the burden of work and recreation they saw in the urban centers.⁴³³

The "Region" in Regional Planning Embodiment

The RPAA's concept of "region" derived in many ways from the ideas of Scottish socio-biologist Sir Patrick Geddes, whose writings laid the groundwork for linking regional planning with the objective of establishing the ideal conditions for American-centric notions of health and social improvement. As a polymath well versed in biology, sociology, geography and town planning, as well as a supporter of Ebenezer Howard's garden city vision, Geddes interpreted the historical evolution of cities as organisms whose significance were in relation to each historical stage's

⁴³³ "Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Regional Planning Association," Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 8, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; "The Regional Planning Association of America," CURMC.

technological advancements and the relation between bodies, technology, and environments. Initially trained as a biologist, Geddes conceptualized the city as a progressively evolving organism, with the actions of citizens and the surrounding natural environment interlinked and health understood as a teleological entity impacted by man's interaction with nature and his social environment. In this view of history and civilization, the various chronological "ages of man" were in large part determined by the particular technologies of each era—the "paleotechnic" stage signifying the city's entanglement with coal and iron industry, the emergent "neotechnic" stage signifying the hopeful arrival of electricity—resulting in typologies of human occupations (ranging from the woodman to the farmer and fisherman) linked to specific forms of environment (mountains, valleys). Published in a series of articles he titled "Civics," Geddes sought a reconception of sociology, a social movement for a fundamental reshaping of cities and society through the planning of regions for social improvement. He argued for cities to be studied as bio-sociologist entities, and as the expression of not only each particular region's social and civic values, but people's local relations with the region's climate and ecosystem. Through Geddes' bio-sociological approach to planning, regions were to be surveyed as holistic organisms, and the task of the regional planner was to "survey" and arrange people's occupations, activities and livelihoods, within a new order so as to remedy their degenerating condition from living in industrial and environmentally unhealthy cities. Cities (and in Geddes' view, garden cities as well), then, were components within the regional organism, and technology the motor of history that

should be wrestled from the aims of capital accumulation and recalibrated towards the social goods of co-operation and ecological restoration.⁴³⁴

Despite his seeming humanistic, altruistic intentions, however, Geddes' "Civics" can be understood in the context of this dissertation as a project laced with eugenics. He conceived of the region as racially and biologically homogenous and improvable: a marriage of environmental planning with biological improvement strategies for the purposes of creating the ideal conditions for technologically advanced cities in balance with the natural environment, and a socially and biologically improved citizenry imbued with co-operative, civic virtues. Geddes' goal was the creation of environments that were not only ideal in terms of their relation to nature, but in terms of their capability as conditions that could physically and socially improve citizens. Physical culture and the body within Geddes' regional planning, thus, was marked with the eugenics and technological and environmental determinism: health and social-physical improvement was interrelated with and heavily determined by the makeup and conditions of the surrounding region.⁴³⁵

Geddes and Ebenezer Howard supported each other's planning schemes and endeavors, but it was in large part Geddes' bio-social regionalism that would steer the RPAA's planning ideas away from the British model established at Letchworth. As

⁴³⁴ Patrick Geddes, "Civics: As Applied Sociology, Part I," in *The Ideal City*, ed. Helen E. Meller (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), 75-90; Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 36-38; Volker M. Welter, *Biopolis: Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002).

⁴³⁵ Noah Hysler-Rubin, *Patrick Geddes and Town Planning: A Critical View* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 44, 59-65; Helen Meller, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 140-144; Chris Renwick, "The Practice of Spencerian Science: Patrick Geddes's Biosocial Program, 1876-1889," *Isis* (2009): 36-57; Robert Bud, *The Uses of Life: A History of Biotechnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 66-70, 75.

Mumford himself wrote, “[t]he garden-city is useful only as a concrete objective in a complete scheme of regional cities...”⁴³⁶

Lewis Mumford incorporated Geddes’ regionalist ideas in his early writings on cities and technology in history, and, along with his RPAA colleague Benton MacKaye, posited modern, yet wilderness-based recreation as the practical result of a modern, ideal, naturally healthful conceptions of embodiment. In the 1920s, the young Mumford, who called Geddes his philosophical and intellectual “master”, represented the intellectual catalyst and planning philosopher of the RPAA, while architect Clarence Stein remained the organization’s practical and “decisive leader.”⁴³⁷ Unlike his professional colleagues in the newly formed organization, who specialized in fields such as architecture and town planning, Mumford was more interested in explicating a generalized philosophy of architecture, the sociology of the urban environment, and the rational reordering of civilization in balance with nature. In his 1922 *The Story of Utopias*, Mumford colloquially followed the history of utopian community experiments, arguing the potential Geddesian regionalism offered in rationally reconstructing healthier social and civic relations between people, industry, cities, and surrounding natural regions. Strikingly similar to Unwin and Parker’s nostalgia for medieval village relations with surrounding nature, Mumford lamented how the “excellent efforts” in the garden city movement in creating “a

⁴³⁶ Kargon and Mollala, *Invented Edens*, 16-18; Creese, *The Search for Environment*, 303; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 170-173; Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, 98; Pierre Clavel, “Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes: Two Approaches to City Development,” in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 38-57.

⁴³⁷ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 165-167. For a history of the close, productive relationship between Mumford and Geddes, see Frank G. Novak, Jr., ed., *Lewis Mumford & Patrick Geddes: The Correspondence* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

common pattern for the good life” paled in comparison to the villages of “mediaeval civilization”—later expanding this view by equating the “sound basis for health” of the medieval town with its location in “open country.” Rational regional planning offered the means through which creative artists could reconstruct a healthier social order. The “healthy body” was both symbolic—the personification of a community harmoniously balancing its conditions for natural and technological health—and practical as the manifestation of regional conditions allowed for a renewal of healthy physical and social life by placing people in more advantageous conditions in a geographic region common in climate, landscape, and culture.⁴³⁸

In his subsequent book *Technics and Civilization*—an even more explicit expansion from the lexicon and ideas of Patrick Geddes—Mumford articulated what for him constituted the problematic manifestations of embodiment and physical culture in modern industrial society. By incorporating Geddes’ historical categorization of the evolution of cities and technology, he waged that nineteenth-century paleotechnic industrialization, with its environmentally degrading coal mining and burning processes and concomitant links to capital gain, had upset the once healthy relation between city and region. The result was the accumulation of large, over-industrialized “conurbations” brimming with congestion, slum housing, lack of green space, and unhealthy conditions. This mechanization of modern, urban life, in Mumford’s depiction, cultivated a populace who naturally compensated the loss of spontaneous excitement and competition with masculine mass spectacles of

⁴³⁸ Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (New York: Boni and Liverright, 1928), 40-41, 297; Donald L. Miller, *Lewis Mumford: A Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), 163-167; Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harvest Book, 1970), 42.

sport. The emergence of such mass sporting spectacles represented not only the dominance of processes of capitalist dehumanization, but also an instinctual desire for “forms of surrogate manliness and bravado” arising with the socializing dangers of “machine civilization”. Mumford did not abandon a sense of hope in rationally controlling and organizing the forces of capitalist innovation, for he argued that recent technological advancements—namely, electricity—could be harnessed in a new “neotechnic,” industrial order in which natural resources were conserved and cities beautified: a region of “Eutopia,” a more practical utopia of “effective health and well-being” brought by the emergent cultural practices of scientific regional planning.⁴³⁹ In the age of modern, industrial, paleotechnic culture, however, citizens were victims of capitalist cultural alienation, and commercial, mass sporting spectacles a result of the urban-technological-capitalist system’s need to stabilize people’s need to escape the dreariness and mundanity of the age of the machine. People’s bodies in modern, paleotechnic environments were unhealthy, prone to the forces of commercial exploitation, and sufferers of the dehumanizing effects of competitive, mass sports, “one of the mass-duties of the machine age,” and the unhealthy body was conceptualized as the material effect of technologies conquest of natural environments rather the result of the complex relations to environment, technology, human agency and capitalist forces.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 37-38; Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), 303-307.

⁴⁴⁰ Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 307; John L. Thomas, “Lewis Mumford: Regionalist Historian,” *Reviews in American History* 1 (1988): 158-172; See William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991).

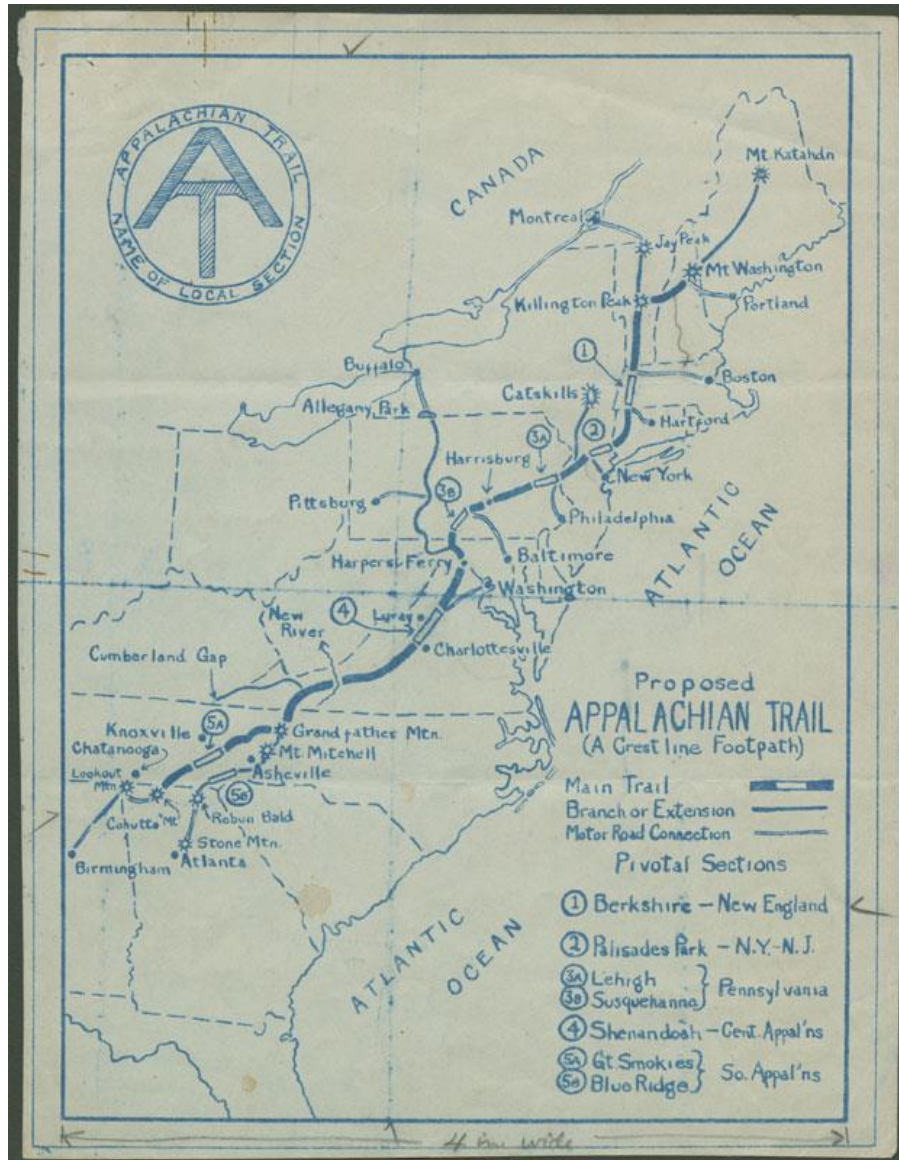


Figure 4.1 – Benton MacKaye’s hand-drawn map and proposal for his Appalachian Trail. Original located in the MacKaye Family Papers, Collection Call # ML-5, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Image retrieved from Smithsonian National Museum of American History website, http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/appalachian_trail_5.html.

The American Frontier, Wilderness Recreation, and the Appalachian Trail

The notions of natural healthfulness embedded within Mumford’s regionalist approach to planning should be understood in relation to RPAA colleague Benton

MacKaye's ideas for an Appalachian Trail in the eastern United States, for in this relation arises the nostalgic "wilderness" and pastoral ideals of their regional planning visions. The Appalachian Trail was one of the early projects closely linked to the RPAA, that was imagined as means of providing residents with access to natural "recreation" through meaningful contact and experiencing of conserved regional environments as "countryside" seemingly undisturbed by urban life. MacKaye, a Harvard-educated conservationist and former forester who idealized community through a residual nostalgia for the typical New England village model, described his Appalachian Trail project in 1921 in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*: a series of "recreational communities" linked by a trail through the Appalachian Mountains from New England to Georgia.⁴⁴¹ The project, in MacKaye's estimation, would serve as a planned ecological "base" upon which planners could develop a more "systematic" and "extensive" regional community with better housing—along with garden cities—and an important first step in modernizing the Appalachian "wilderness" for the benefit of healthful, yet controlled recreation. This would result in not just a hiking trail, but an ecological "backbone" through which to develop the eastern region. As architecture historian Robert McCullough put it, the trail was designed as "a strategic battle line against encroaching civilization and capitalism," a "project of social reordering" that sought to preserve undeveloped spaces for "productive recreation". MacKaye didn't just advocate constructing a trail for hiking and camping, but a project to make leisure more economically "efficient" and instill the conditions for a socially-improved, civically-minded "outdoor

⁴⁴¹ McCullough, *A Path for Kindred Spirits*, 10.

community life” that would give residents “relief from the various shackles of commercial civilization...”⁴⁴² The Appalachian Trail project signified for MacKaye and the RPAA a reconstructed passage “from civilization *into* the wild”: a prescription of restorative nature and “wilderness” for the overcivilized, modern urban middle class. Through the regional planning of underdeveloped mountain land on the eastern seaboard, such projects would provide the necessary conditions for outdoor recreation and give residents a Thoreauvian experience of “re-creating” themselves through nature. “Wildlands” would be preserved in balance with urban areas, instilling a healthier and sustainable equilibrium between “wilderness” and urban “civilization, a necessary condition for the fashioning white, middle-class notions of health and masculinity in modern, urban America.”⁴⁴³

The healthy bodies Mumford and MacKaye imagined in their regional planning ideas were similarly constituted like the nostalgic and residual, yet modern and reformist visions of English garden city bodies. Just as Howard’s depiction of

⁴⁴² Benton MacKaye, “An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning,” *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 1 (1921): 325-330; “The Regional Planning Association of America,” Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Robert L. McCullough, *A Path for Kindred Spirits: The Friendship of Clarence Stein and Benton MacKaye* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2012), 5. For discussions of “wilderness” and conservation/environmentalism in American history, see Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Robert W. Righter, *The Battle over Hetch Hetchy: America’s Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: the Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Christopher Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁴⁴³ Mark Luccarelli, *Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region: The Politics of Planning* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993), 84-93, 156; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 3-6; Kent Curtis, “The Virtue of Thoreau: Biography, Geography, and History in Walden Woods,” *Environmental History* 1 (2010): 31-53; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man*; David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: the Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

English countryside depicted a feminized “bosom” and “source of all health, all wealth, all knowledge,” Mumford and MacKaye’s regional planning ideas conjured traditional conceptions of the feminized, recreational “pastoral garden” of American wilderness spaces as the necessary antidote to modern industrialization and mechanic urban life.⁴⁴⁴ The American wilderness, conserved by the Appalachian Trail, was epitomized an American “Garden of Eden” narrative similar to Ebenezer Howard’s feminized depiction of English countryside. The trail would provide “the wilderness beauties, the wilderness health, the wilderness virtues, which we have so largely lost.”⁴⁴⁵ Mumford and MacKaye linked their conceptions of ideal national health and recreation practices to the conserving of “wild” nature spaces adjacent to cities for purposes of physical, social and civic improvement. In their estimation, by hiking in “primeval” wilderness spaces and experiencing direct encounters with nature, Americans could be re-exposed to the American agrarian values lost in the transformations brought by industrial urbanity. In this, Mumford and MacKaye’s ideas entailed a backwards-facing nostalgia for the American nation’s experience in “wilderness” or “frontier” spaces and their associated social and ideological significance as the crucibles through which masculine conquest fashioned American character and democratic values.⁴⁴⁶ Yet, Mumford and MacKaye’s project and ideas were also wholly modern and dominant cultural formations, as they imagined such regional, ecologically balanced planning would not only reinforce traditional notions

⁴⁴⁴ Howard, *To-Morrow*, 7, 10; Andrew Wood, “Re-Reading Disney’s Celebration: Gendered Topography in a Heterotopian Pleasure Garden,” in *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*, eds. Amy Bingaman, Lise Sanders, and Rebecca Zorach (New York: Routledge, 2002), 196; Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*.

⁴⁴⁵ Schmitt, *Back to Nature*, 184.

⁴⁴⁶ Luccarelli, *Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region*, 110-111.

of the American masculine conquest of natural environments—narratives of “virgin lands” which were evacuated of the presence and agency of American Indian peoples—but would solve the need for accessible, restorative leisure practices for the urban middle classes. Their ideas were not to supplant traditional American masculine values and democratic virtues, but to restore their vigor, vibrancy and sustainability through modern, emergent regional planning strategies.⁴⁴⁷

As Mumford followed Geddes in seeing the evolution of humans, cities, and technology as a progressive teleology of chronological stages of historical development—and MacKaye advocated the modernizing and conservation of healthful wilderness environments adjacent to the urban east—the approach to relating cities and suburbs to “nature” reproduced a Turnerian binary logic distinguishing “civilization” and “savagery” and conceptualization of the “healthy” American body as the corporeal register shaped between the virtues of nature and urban civilization. In 1893, progressive historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote his famous “frontier thesis,” in which he declared the “existence of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward,” explained the history of American society’s development. The thesis entailed evolutionary frontier stages of American development, from the arrival of European settlers on the eastern seaboard to the 1890 “closing” of the western frontier. Turner’s thesis, which would come to heavily influence American and western historiography for much of the twentieth century, entailed a specific, embodied logic in its explanation of

⁴⁴⁷ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*.

American society. Because Americans developed their character through of experience of “civilizing” undeveloped “frontier” spaces, the logic explained, processes of post-1890 American capitalist development could similarly be understood through this stark binary opposition, distinguishing “civilized,” developed spaces and practices from those exemplified as new forms of untamed “wilderness.” The rugged individualist American was, in Turner’s nostalgic frontier vision, the Anglo-American man of Teutonic and Germanic heritage who forged American civilization and social development through reshaping of frontier “wilderness” into “the complexity of city life.”⁴⁴⁸

At its core, Turner’s “Frontier Thesis” was a racialized, imperialist ideology dressed as an explanation of historical causality. The argument privileged and reproduced the myth of the White frontiersman’s conquest of American wilderness, whitewashed the exploitation and environmental degradation wrought by the expansion of capitalism, and silenced the agency and presence of woman, minorities, and American Indians peoples in the American West. In its epistemological foundation, Turner reproduced the cultural, Thoreauvian ideal of “nature” as a feminized “wilderness” vulnerable to the dangers of unchecked commercial exploitation. Paralleling Howard’s depiction in *To-morrow*, health in Turner’s

⁴⁴⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1996), 1-3; Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, 52. For discussions of Turnerian frontier historical logic, see Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 1968); Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery/Land of Promise: the European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1981); Richard White, “Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill,” in *The Frontier in American culture: an Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994 - January 7, 1995*, ed. James L. Grossman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). For more information about the history of this frontier mythology, see Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

American frontier society was equated with “nature,” and healthy bodies those of the Teutonic and Germanic races who restored their once natural interaction with nature through their labor and appropriation of natural leisure pursuits.⁴⁴⁹ By conceptualizing American development as a national process of “civilizing” undeveloped wilderness, rather than as culturally diverse contexts linked to capitalist and imperial conquest, Turnerian understandings of American history and people’s historical relation with the environments subsumed the nation’s racial, gendered, and imperialist politics under a weighty, whitewashed myth of the enduring struggles between “civilization” and “savagery”. By the arrival of garden city-inspired American regional planning, the city signified, overcivilization, lack of rational organization, and spaces evacuated of the relations with nature that once birthed American national and democratic values.⁴⁵⁰ This kind of Turnerian logic permeated American twentieth-century urban discourse, surfacing in urban contexts as middle class, white reformers advocated the uses of sporting and physical cultural practices—sport as an “artificial frontier” for White masculine, “civilized” cultural

⁴⁴⁹ Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 1-38; Merchant, *The Death of Nature*; Sellers, “Thoreau’s Body,” 486-487; Smith, *Virgin Land*; Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*; Donald Worster, *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

⁴⁵⁰ Tarr, “The City as an Artifact of Technology and the Environment,” 145-170. Since at least the 1970s, American and “New Western” historians, influenced by theoretical and analytical developments in social and cultural history, have deconstructed Turner’s influential “frontier thesis” and its role within narratives on westward expansion and the American nation’s relation to capitalist development, environmental degradation, and American Indian peoples. See Patricia N. Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987); Richard White, *It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own’: A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Cronon, *Uncommon Ground*.

expression within urban locales—and spoke of the “taming” of natural wilderness through urban and suburban construction.⁴⁵¹

Mumford was not a self-described acolyte of Turner’s characterization of frontier values of wilderness, and critiqued how this pioneer and frontier version of American history rested on environmental exploitation on behalf of individual and capitalist self-interest. As Mark Luccarelli writes, “For Mumford, American capitalism was built upon and appropriated the frontier mythology.” Mumford, however, did not rethink Turnerian histories of westward expansion, but rather articulated an enlightened, ecologically friendly conception of modernity that could be brought by the harnessing of technological progress for democratic principle and the social good.⁴⁵² With a central component being the creation of social, environmental, and urban conditions for optimal health, Mumford’s writing reversed the Turnerian binary distinguishing spaces of “savagery” and “civilization” in order to critique capitalism’s chaotic overdevelopment of urban areas. In a 1921 essay for *The New Republic*, Mumford employed this inverted Turnerian frontier logic in his depiction of the state of the urban landscape. He conceptualized the uncoordinated development of “suburbia” as a modern “wilderness” and the average commuting

⁴⁵¹ Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism*; Frederic L. Paxson, “The Rise of Sport,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (1917): 143-168; Randy Roberts and James Stuart Olson, *Winning is the Only Thing: Sports in America Since 1945* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Benjamin G. Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1989); Mark Dyreson, “Sport History and the History of Sport in North America,” *Journal of Sport History* 3 (2007): 405-414; Susan Brownell, *The 1904 Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: Sport, Race, and American Imperialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); David L. Andrews, Jacob Bustad, and Samuel Clevenger, “National Sporting Pastimes, Spectacles of Sporting Otherness and American Imaginings, 1880-1920,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 1-2 (2014): 224-249.

⁴⁵² Lewis Mumford, *The Golden Day: A Study in American Literature and Culture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968); Luccarelli, *Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region*, 44-45.

worker a “barbarian” forced by the results of capitalism to traverse an alienating and unhealthy urban environment devoid of healthy and necessary “cultural resources”—“theaters and concerts and art exhibitions and the like...” The frontier metaphors of the “winning” and civilizing remained, but the spaces deemed as an imagined “wilderness” shifted. Middle and upper class American suburbs were emergent terrains of opportunity for the “remaking” of American democracy and character, as the uncontrolled, irrational development wrought by commercial capitalism resulted in the social regression of overdeveloped cities and conurbations. The congested, polluted, unsanitary, unscientifically designed urban districts signified a modern “wilderness”: spaces where selfishness and the profit motive reigned supreme, and the needs of residential health and well-being sacrificed. Modern regional planning was needed to tame and civilize the urban wilderness.⁴⁵³

What Mumford advocated was a “taming” of this process of unchecked overdevelopment for the purposes of social, physical, and national benefit. “What is the use of conquering nature,” Mumford wrote in *Technics and Civilization*, “if we fall a prey to nature in the form of unbridled men,” referring to the “power-lusting” of industrial capitalist gain. The modern urban-suburban dweller, due to this unchecked capitalist development and the lack of comprehensive regional planning, became a product of the urban “dissolute landscape,” a new “savage” isolated in a “no man’s land which was neither town nor country,” regressed into a more primitive state by the excesses of complex city life. This resonated with MacKaye’s own exhortation of the importance of wilderness in his 1928 book *The New Exploration*: the “new

⁴⁵³ Lewis Mumford, “The Wilderness of Suburbia,” *The New Republic*, 7 September 1921, 44-45

exploration,” for MacKaye, was the “labyrinth” of urban development built after man’s conquest of nature. “The very conquering of one wilderness has been the weaving of another.” The task of regional planning, for MacKaye was to “unravel” the “modern labyrinth” of “industrial civilization,” a “new exploration” of a new “wilderness” that conjured the Turnerian values of the frontier experience. Cities needed proper planning, and urban residents needed healthier spaces (wilderness spaces) for the rebuilding of American social character.⁴⁵⁴

Mumford’s article exhibited how 1920s understandings of “Nature” and “wilderness” were being formulated in response to questions of industrial capitalism and American individualism, and how reformers worked within a Turnerian binary framework to imagine emergent forms of healthier communities that reflected a more civilized, sustainable regulating of environmental spaces and natural processes. The feminized, passive “Nature” of Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes’ visions—Geddes wrote in *Cities in Evolution* how “Nature gives us, must give us, health and beauty anew”—remained influential and in polar opposition to the city, itself was little more than “an ugly accretion of factories, warehouses, and shops,” a space of “brutish gregariousness”. What was needed was a modern regional planning that aided people’s “healthy human reaction” of wanting to escape to more rural

⁴⁵⁴ Mumford, “The Wilderness of Suburbia,” 44-45; Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 366; Lewis Mumford, *The Conduct of Life* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 3-21; Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*, 163-165; White, *The Organic Machine*, 56; Benton MacKaye, *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 5. For more discussion on this kind of Turnerian logic concerning wilderness/frontier spaces and its relation to social theories of individualism and capitalist development, see Will Wright, *The Wild West: The Mythical Cowboy & Social Theory* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001).

environments, but expanded the affordability, accessibility, and social significance of living in such healthier environments.⁴⁵⁵

In this critique of capital's onslaught on the modern city, Mumford likened the urban dweller as a kind of modern frontiersman: the "hunter in the mountain wilds" metamorphosed into an urban commuter. Because capital and industrial, commercial development disrupted the city's natural relations with regional environments, Mumford saw the paleotechnic centers as "simply close-packed areas" where the lives of workers "are confined" and not "marked by multitudes of common institutions — clubs, guilds, theaters, gymnasia, academies, universities — through which their lives might be expressed." His conception of the healthy, civilized body remained the civilized antithesis to an undeveloped wilderness: the cultural-corporeal of proper spatial and social development. What needed to be solved was the planning of regions in balance with cities, so as to provide modernized conditions for "renewal", meaning healthy, democratic and physical cultural development. This emphasis on reestablishing a symbiosis between region and built community bore a striking resemblance to the approach of famous American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who saw bourgeois suburbs of the nineteenth century as escapes from urban life, but as "a delicate synthesis of town and wilderness."⁴⁵⁶ In a way, the

⁴⁵⁵ Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915), 86; Elizabeth Baigent, "Patrick Geddes, Lewis Mumford and Jean Gottmann: divisions over 'megapolis'," *Progress in Human Geography* 6 (2004): 688-689.

⁴⁵⁶ Mumford, "The Wilderness of Suburbia," 44-45; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 79; Robert Lewis, "Frontier and Civilization in the Thought of Frederick Law Olmsted," *American Quarterly* 4 (1977): 385-403; Geoffrey Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted: Landscape Architecture as Conservative Reform," *The Journal of American History* 4 (1976): 869-889.

reader can see a complicated mixture of residual and emergent cultural ideas on health, nature, and planning coming a multitude of sources, included Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, as well as dominant understanding of modern America's relation to its nineteenth-century conquest of the "savage" American west. The development of planned spaces for regional health and recreation became Mumford's exemplar of modern, healthy American civilization.

Thus, it seemed Unwin made an apt assertion in 1922 when he argued that American town planning tended to concern issues related to recreation. Unwin's characterization of American town planning captured the planners' "mentalités" on the healthfulness of modern, emergent physical cultural practices as they crafted a distinctly American approach to regional planning and the construction of new garden cities.⁴⁵⁷ The regionalism of Geddes and his "Regional Survey"—the outdoor, sociologically-minded, direct observation of regions, their natural landscapes and urban developments—was, as Helen Meller explained, a "social service" rooted in eugenics: a kind of diagnosis of the regional habitat in order to instigate a "form of planning for the physical and social well-being of individuals which would lead to an improvement in the social organism" and rebalance the city's relation to the surrounding environment.⁴⁵⁸ Like the English garden city discourse preceding the formation of the RPAA, eugenic thought percolated within the regionalist approach of

⁴⁵⁷ By "mentalités," I refer to works of history associated with the French *Annales* School of the early twentieth century, which explored the history of groups in terms of their thoughts and views about society and the world around them during specific time periods. For a good study of the history of mentalités approach, see Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 162-182.

⁴⁵⁸ Helen Meller, "Note to Civics: As Applied Sociology, Parts I and II," in *The Ideal City*, ed. Helen E. Meller (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), 73; Hysler-Rubin, *Patrick Geddes and Town Planning*, 52.

RPAA architects and planners. However, while English garden cities tended to employ a nostalgia for pastoral and medieval living arrangements as part of their modern town planning and biopolitical objectives, the RPAA's prioritizing of regionalist projects, such as MacKaye's Appalachian Trail, suggests that they linked modern planning with the conservation of environmental spaces for the purposes of refashioning a healthier relation between nature and culture, work and leisure, urban and rural. The imagined healthy bodies undergirding the RPAA's objectives in 1923, their first year in existence, paralleled the embodied dimensions of English garden cities: they sought the creation of communities that were "healthy" in that they provided conditions for more "efficient" workers and industry, modern, well-built, and healthy housing, and a more "stimulating" balance between an increasing in cultural amenities and the privacy of suburban-rural living, as well as built and green space. The pastoral nostalgia of the English garden city and its agricultural belt, however, became an American racial nationalist nostalgia for traditional, Turnerian "wilderness" spaces and their "natural" recreation activities. Integrated within regional planning objectives, the planners spoke of recreation and healthy living as the physical cultural ameliorator that resolved their desire to restore American democratic and frontier values while employing modern planning tools for the purposes of population relocation onto modern, more efficient communities.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁹ "The Regional Planning Association of America," Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Gerstle, *American Crucible*; Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism*. The relation between the creation of the Appalachian Trail and the biopolitical underpinnings of RPAA planning is important to underscore, as recent sport history scholarship isolates the physical cultural history of the Appalachian Trail from its contextual significance as a central ingredient of the RPAA's plan for reshaping the eastern seaboard and reinstating a modern, yet natural relation between regional environment and urban development. See Adam Berg, "'To Conquer Myself': The New Strenuousness and the Emergence of 'Thru-hiking' on the Appalachian Trail in the 1970s," *Journal of Sport History* 1 (2015): 1-19.

Conclusion

In chapter five, I examine the physical cultural and biopolitical dimensions of the practical experiments in community building undertaken by RPAA planners Clarence Stein and Henry Wright in the 1920s: Sunnyside Gardens, New York and Radburn, New Jersey. As the reader will come to find, Sunnyside Gardens, as the CHC's first designed community, functioned as an experiment in garden city planning in the United States. Constructed on Long Island in the confines of New York City, the physical cultural forms of Sunnyside deviated from the pastoral labor-oriented prescriptions of Letchworth. At Sunnyside, emergent sporting practices and landscaped recreational park space served as the primary spaces for inculcating healthy residents bodies. By 1927, however, Clarence Stein articulated an emergent urban form that fused garden city principles with the objectives of regional planning, a vision that would subsequently shape the biopolitical prescriptions of their second planned community at Radburn. Stein sent out a press release to report his proposal of "[a] new type of community, the regional city": an amalgam of Ebenezer Howard's garden city with Patrick Geddes' regionalist philosophy, whereby self-sufficient, wholly planned communities could be integrated surrounding agriculture and recreational "outlying primeval wilderness." The regional city, the RPAA's visionary remedy for addressing the problems of urban congestion and lack of adequate housing, was part of a long term project of integrating garden city-inspired

communities with “wilderness” environments: for RPAA planners, the nostalgic, recreational spaces for the restoration of healthy American bodies.⁴⁶⁰

Stein announced his proposal at a dinner at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York, where he was seconded by Thomas Adams, the former manager of Letchworth Garden City. Adams, by 1927, had supervised and directed the heavily capitalized Regional Plan of New York for the Russell Sage Foundation. The plan endorsed New York City as the region’s irreplaceable source of employment and proposed a realistic diffusing of industry, population, and commerce throughout the suburbs so as to regulate the expansion of the urban area. Adams did not, however, advocate the wholesale decentralization of population that was the ideological touchstone of the English garden city movement and American regional planning. This was an indication that Stein’s speech and proposal may not have necessarily reflected everyone within the organization. Adams’ regional plan, according to historian Ted Steinberg, was a “landscape plan” of dominant cultural elements, designed to “allow New York to proceed efficiently” as a spatial terrain of capitalism. It was, in its essence, a plan to ease and make more efficient the transit of workers and allow the conduct of business to occur at a much more cost-effective pace, as well as coordinate the allocation of park and open space throughout the region. Lewis Mumford sharply criticized Adams’ plan, seeing it as little more than giving New York a “manifest destiny” in terms of regional control and urban development. The Regional Plan of New York represented not only “the most ambitious American planning effort until

⁴⁶⁰ “For Release in Morning Papers November 16th, 1927,” Folder 9 - Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation), 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism*, 116.

the New Deal,” but the decline in support for decentralizing cities and populations along the lines advocated by Howard and Unwin in Britain and the RPAA in the United States.⁴⁶¹

Yet, Stein, Wright, Alexander Bing at City Housing Corporation would move forward with their planning and creation of a regional city at Radburn, New Jersey. Stein’s 1927 proposal showcased a shift in reliance upon of the ideals of English garden city model, exemplified at Letchworth, but also in the underlying biopolitical intentions and meaning of physical cultural forms of American regional planning projects. The regional city, indeed, was to cure “congestion”—the “symptom of the disease” of cities—by providing “healthful living, gardens, playgrounds and other features unattainable now” within a “carefully planned” built environment where “industry could function normally...” Without mentioning Benton MacKaye’s Appalachian Trail project, Stein asserted that regional cities would be “healthful places to live in, efficient places to work in,” with large open and recreation spaces, gardens, and “all the equipment of the modern city.” Stein’s “regional city” represented the increasingly modern character of urban planning objectives, and the role of dominant, bourgeois sporting, leisure, and other physical cultural practices in determining the healthful quality of each new community. Yet, they would not be “garden cities,” Stein argued, but “New or Regional Cities, because they will have a definite relation to the countryside that surrounds them.” What would make them regional cities would be their relation to larger regional redevelopments, and links to

⁴⁶¹ Ted Steinberg, *Gotham Unbound: The Ecological History of New York* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 187-188. For a history of the Russell Sage Foundation, see Ruth Crocker, *Mrs. Russell Sage: Women's Activism and Philanthropy in Gilded Age and Progressive Era America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 173-175.

conservation and recreation projects such as the Appalachian Trail. Beyond functioning as park spaces for “recreation” and sources for the “production of food”—undoubtedly a residual idea from Howard’s Garden City principles—Stein did not elaborate as to the relation between surrounding countryside and such Regional Cities, but he did not need to.⁴⁶²

What was becoming clear was that the ideology of health of the emergent regional city was a mixture of residuals of English garden city nostalgia for pastoral labor, American nostalgia for the physical cultural and social virtues of wilderness, and the uses of emergent white, middle class sport and recreation practices as the essential ingredient for American urban health. All of these cultural elements, within a biopolitical strategy for cultivating healthful, efficient living while operating within the dominant logic and relations of early twentieth-century American urban capitalism. Stein’s regional city ideal expressed the particular biopolitical nostalgia of these American garden city-influenced planners, and indicated a shift in planning that relied on definitions of nature and healthy physical culture in terms of their harmonization with the dominant American values imbued in frontier and wilderness mythology.

⁴⁶² “For Release in Morning Papers November 16th, 1927,” CURMC.

Chapter Five: Highwayless Healthy Living: The Biopolitics of American Regional City Planning

Clarence Stein and Benton MacKaye met at Hudson Guild Farm in rural New Jersey in 1921, during a gathering with those affiliated with the *Journal of American Institute of Architects* (AIA). Stein was the chairman of the AIA's Committee on Community Planning, and it was on that farm surrounded by countryside that MacKaye described to Stein his ideas on an "Appalachian Trail" as an expanse of conserved wilderness, recreation, and community development along the eastern seaboard. The farm was property of the Hudson Guild settlement house in New York City. Stein's mother was a longtime member of the Society for Ethical Culture, an organization closely associated with Hudson Guild, and it was during a Hudson Guild summer camp that a young Stein met his future wife, the actress Aline MacMahon.⁴⁶³ Settlement houses during this time were institutions established by well-to-do white reformers in low income immigrant areas of large cities like New York and Chicago. Volunteering middle-class men and women, working often according to the tenets of "social Christianity" thought, would offer through the settlement houses English classes, day care and small play areas for children, gymnasium facilities to play sports, and other organized programs as a way to socially assimilate poor immigrants through more "civilized" American middle-class practices.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ McCullough, *A Path for Kindred Spirits*, 4-5, 8-9.

⁴⁶⁴ See Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990); Judith Ann Trolander, *Professionalism and Social Change: From the Settlement House Movement to Neighborhood Centers, 1886 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

The Hudson Guild Farm would remain an important meeting place for the RPAA. It was there in 1923 that MacKaye and Lewis Mumford met and developed a “special bond” with Patrick Geddes over the topic of wide scale regional planning. After the 1925 International Federation of Town Planning and Garden Cities Conference in New York City, the RPAA invited Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwin, Barry Parker, and other leaders of the English garden city movement to the farm, where they enjoyed square dances, folk-ballads, and other traditional products of Appalachian folklife.⁴⁶⁵ Hudson Guild Farm was spatial unifier connecting the emergent cultural ideas in the RPAA’s planning approach with their residual nostalgia for the healthfulness of Appalachian nature and folk life. It signified how their appreciation for (physical) cultural gifts of rural life combined with their modernist desires to redevelop entire cities and regions for the purposes of American social, physical, and environmental improvement. All of this, with active, recreational physical culture at the center of their objectives.

To understand the dominant, residual, and emergent cultural elements entailed in American regional city planning and biopolitics, we must study their materialization in relation to the planners’ ideology of “natural” physical culture and its imagined relation to spaces of rural life and wilderness. When Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and City Housing Corporation created the regional city of Radburn, New Jersey in 1929, its plan and intentional layout deviated in purpose not only from their planning of Sunnyside Gardens, New York only a few years earlier—their first

⁴⁶⁵ Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism*, 117; February 5th, 1925 RPA meeting minutes, Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; “Hudson Guild Farm, April 25th-26th, 1925 – List of Foreign Guests,” Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

“experiment” in planning an American garden city—but from the preceding English garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn. With Radburn, the planners and thinkers of the RPAA and CHC attempted to design a healthier, affordable, modern community that adapted to the arrival of automobile transportation and technology, a shift in spatial layout that was also a concomitant shift in the planners’ idealization of healthful embodiment. Their overall idea was to restructure a garden city-inspired community with modest, affordable homes in order to safeguard residents and their children from the congestion and dangers of the automobile, thus creating the conditions where American families and children could enjoy open, common spaces of leisure, recreation and play without fear of crossing a busy, heavily trafficked highway. Yet, this approach to town planning was directly aligned with the regionalist vision of the RPAA. As their colleague and Appalachian Trail planner Benton MacKaye explained in 1930, Radburn was “the key” to his ideas for “townless highways,” limited-access corridors surrounded by preserved open spaces that would link decentralized “highwayless” towns and leave the fully designed towns undisturbed by the efficient flow of automobiles. MacKaye, Lewis Mumford and the CHC believed that by planning towns according to the model exemplified at Radburn and in concert with the planning and construction of townless highways. This would allow entire regions to be redeveloped and made into healthier environments where consumerism was disconnected to automobile traffic, communities were protected from potential breakdown brought by motor congestion, and residents and travelers alike could “experience” the healthfulness of large, surrounding, preserved natural environment. The planners imagined they could create the conditions for healthier

resident bodies not only through modern organized physical cultural practices within the town, but in relation to access to the preserved natural environment of their regional vision. To understand the deeply biopolitical sensibility of American regional planning—their intentions to create the conditions where a healthier, white, middle-class American decentralized democracy might grow—we must study both materializations.⁴⁶⁶

This chapter examines the actual planning and development of both Sunnyside and Radburn, studying the relation between their material realization with the planners' constructions of nature, health and the body, particularly in terms of their relation to the historical discourse of recreation and physical culture within the regional projects and plans by those in the RPAA. From the construction of Sunnyside Gardens in 1924 to the advent of the Great Depression in 1929, the architects, planners, and reformers of City Housing Corporation, created, to date, two of the most illustrative examples of comprehensive garden city planning in the United States. As the spatial and material articulations of the cultural and ideational milieu surrounding the RPAA—the American organ of the international garden city movement—their planning can and should be revisited in terms of how the planners and reformers conceived of the role of physical culture and the body in their designing of each planned communities. Yet, to understand the particular biopolitical

⁴⁶⁶ Robert B. Hudson, *Radburn: A Plan for Living* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1934); Byron R. Hanke, "Land-Use Intensity, A Guidance System for Housing and Urban Development," Folder 9 - I.B. The Radburn Idea, Cities To Come, Box 10, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; "Discussion of the Possibilities of Regional Planning," 17-19 October 1930, Folder 12 - RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Matthew Dalbey, *Regional Visionaries and Metropolitan Boosters: Decentralization, Regional Planning, Parkways During the Interwar Years* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 59-60.

and nostalgic dimensions that shaped each community's planning, we must not only study their emergence not only in relation to the intellectual currents of the international garden city movement and the RPAA, but to the particular historical and contextual circumstances that shifted the planners' focus from constructing a new garden city (Sunnyside) to the creation of an entirely new kind of community: a "regional city" (Radburn). What emanates from the chapter's historical narrative is a story of American planners reformulating English garden city ideals in a particular American context of eugenics, racial exclusion, reinforcement of gendered notions of the nuclear family, while highlighting the enduring significance of traditional white American definitions of "wilderness" and physical culture, as the middle and upper-middle class planners imagined them as the necessary recreational spaces for cultivating the nation's democratic values and character.

The economic and social reverberations of the depression spelled the eventual dissolving of the Regional Planning Association of America, the bankruptcy of City Housing Corporation, and the ceasing of new housing construction at Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, but it did end the persistence of garden city principles in American community planning. As Daniel Schaffer explained, City Housing Corporation, as a privately funded company much like First Garden City Limited, functioned by the capitalist logic of progressive capital accumulation and continuous expansion, paying for new construction through company stock and bond sales. The community mortgages served as stock and bond collateral. When many Sunnyside and Radburn families were unable to pay their mortgage payments, City Housing lost their primary means of capitalization, a problem that was exacerbated when wealthy

investors demanded to exchange their shares and bonds for money.⁴⁶⁷ Like the construction of Letchworth Garden City, the longevity of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright's community experiments depended on securing upper class political and financial support and successful boosterism. The arrival of widespread economic depression and unemployment heavily impacted the capacity for organizations like CHC and the RPAA to continue their community and urban reform projects. Yet, garden city movement principles remained highly influential in the community building projects of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Administration, particularly in his creation of the federal greenbelt town program for the purposes of employment and housing low income, destitute, former farming families. The intentions of the federal government's greenbelt town program, however, exhibited multiple elements of what James Scott calls "seeing like a state": namely, the "administrative ordering of nature and society" in a way that underpins national conceptions of "citizenship," and a "high-modernist" ideological embrace in science, technology, and the "expansion of production" as constitutive elements in the regulating and ordering of nature and society.⁴⁶⁸ The nostalgic residuals for the natural healthfulness of previous social, environment and physical arrangements remained an element in federal greenbelt planning, but gave way to an emerging, high modernist government project seeking to establish a new co-operative community order through the power of modern government intervention and central planning.

⁴⁶⁷ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 192-194.

⁴⁶⁸ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4-5.

City Housing Corporation Regional Recreation

It is important, in understanding the biopolitical dimensions of Sunnyside Gardens, how the CHC's first garden city-inspired community was shaped by the regionalist ideals and philosophy of their architectural, reformist and planning peers at the RPAA. As these regional planners aimed to rebalance the relations between cities and environments and touted MacKaye's Appalachian Trail project as the future "backbone" of their vision of an entirely redeveloped eastern seaboard region—a modern conservation of natural spaces for the purposes of providing "natural" recreation through hiking—the task of urban decentralization and garden city construction remained central and complementary to this large planning objective. For their stated purpose of promoting the tenets of regional planning, the RPAA called upon itself to instigate studies of housing and urban/regional problems, advocate their findings and studies with interested organizations, corporations and parties, and assist organizations who were carrying out regional planning projects. Yet, in the 1920s the RPAA was also the newly affirmed American chapter of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation, and the members allied themselves to the priority of creating communities "along Garden City lines." Ebenezer Howard's community model remained, in the eyes of the RPAA, the exemplar for providing "better" housing and repopulating urban dwellers away from overcrowded and congested districts.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ "The Regional Planning Association of America," Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; "Proposed Garden City and Regional Planning Association," 7 March 1923, Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

Thus, in their initial meetings, members agreed that any communities they planned would be in essence emergent cultural forms within a dominant urban region: they would be called garden cities “for the time being,” but their overall objective was the realization of a regional plan of “new population centers, where natural resources will be preserved for the community, where industry may be conducted efficiently, and where...adequate...houses, gardens, and recreation grounds will ensure a healthy and stimulating environment.” As historian Stanley Buder put it, RPAA members viewed the creation of garden cities as “only” a “means to an end,” for their “ultimate goal was to create a balance regional order as a basis for a humanistic civilization,” a regionalist vision articulated primarily through the writings and ideas of Lewis Mumford and Benton MacKaye.⁴⁷⁰ From this, dual objectives quickly arose within the RPAA. One was more modernist and emergent in character, and a placation to the dominant spatial relations of urban capitalism, as Clarence Stein, Henry Wright and their colleagues initiated research on the possibility of constructing new, modern garden city in the United States as their RPAA colleagues worked to translate their regionalist philosophy into American planning practice. The other was more residual and nostalgic in its construction, with RPAA funds allocated to support Benton MacKaye’s development of his Appalachian Trail project of tributary rail and road lines linking the primary wilderness hiking trail with community and urban “points of contact”: a project intended to restore conserved spaces of “wilderness” in relation to urban life in order to re-establish a socially and

⁴⁷⁰ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 169; February 5, 1925 RPA Meeting Minutes, FOLDER 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; “Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Regional Planning Association,” 20 April 1923, FOLDER 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

physical healthful balance between technology, hinterland, and urban modernity.⁴⁷¹

The RPAA saw the construction of new garden cities as a complementary objective with the promotion of their regionalist vision and the creation of MacKaye's Appalachian Trail project, and this in turn informed the biopolitical objectives of health, recreation, and physical cultural practices they installed within their garden city plans.

The RPAA itself, however, was a small organization of planners, architects, and thinkers who largely promoted their ideals of regional planning through essays, studies, outreach with likeminded organizations, and conferences. A separate, commercial entity was needed to help financially carry out the creation of actual garden cities in the U.S. For this, Clarence Stein persuaded his friend, New York real estate developer Alexander Bing, to create and finance a limited dividend company they called the City Housing Corporation (CHC) in 1924, with the stated task of building "better homes and communities." Bing, Stein, and fellow RPAA colleague Henry Wright dedicated the CHC as the financial vehicle for experimenting with garden cities and community planning along the guiding principles of the RPAA. Its company objectives conjured notions of benevolent capitalism, with investors offered a "sound conservative business operation netting a fair return" as well as a socially-conscious company that would create, to use the words of a contemporary *New Republic* editorial, communities for "increased human happiness" and "better health and morals."⁴⁷² Emerging during a decade in which the goals of corporations and

⁴⁷¹ "The Regional Planning Association of America," CURMC.

⁴⁷² Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 103-107; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 168-169; Kermit C. Parsons, "British and American Community Design: Clarence Stein's Manhattan Transfer, 1924-1974," in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons

liberal reformers coalesced around the question of urban housing improvement and businesses engaged in practices of welfare capitalism—employers providing their workers with benefits such as sponsored leisure activities, profit sharing programs and pensions for the purposes of controlling labor forces through paternalist care rather than conflict—the CHC served as the financial conduit for American garden city creation.⁴⁷³ As Stein, Wright and Bing focused on the specific aim of planning an American garden city through the CHC, their objectives for “better housing,” while still ideologically allied to the RPAA, were also imbued with notions of improving worker efficiency and contentment through housing and community reform.

During the time Stein, Wright, and Bing began to form the CHC for the purposes of creating a new garden city community, Stein, Benton MacKaye and the RPAA continued their collaborative work on the Appalachian Trail project. Stein worked closely with MacKaye in scouting and surveying the region of the Appalachian belt for the later creation of trail and base lines, as well as detailing the over proposal for a regional resettlement of population based on the preservation of a recreational hiking trail through the Appalachian belt and its links to new living communities and camps. MacKaye’s scouting, surveying, and mapping of the eastern

and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 131; City Housing Corporation Pamphlet *Expert Opinion*, December 1927, Folder 10 - Sunnyside, Queens, 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁴⁷³ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 104-105. For histories that focus on practices of welfare capitalism during the 1920s, see Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1-5; Gerald Zahavi, *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson, 1890-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

region, in close collaboration with and support from Stein and the RPAA, would later expand and become his 1928 published philosophy on regional planning titled *The New Exploration*. The seeming simultaneous development of the Appalachian Trail project and the CHC's garden city experiment at Sunnyside Gardens should not be understated, as their relation, formed through Stein and MacKaye's close friendship and planning collaboration through the RPAA's social intercourse, helps to further unpack the role of healthy bodies and physical culture in their community planning. With his Appalachian Trail project, MacKaye sought not only to preserve space for hiking and other "wilderness" recreational activities, as well as create a protective natural barrier from encroaching urban "civilization," but also called for the creation of public-owned forest preserves to help regulate the growth of the region's new population centers—likely to be designed in part according to garden city principles. The incorporation of wilderness and recreational spaces was integral to the creation of a regional environment suitable for the inspiring of healthier American living.⁴⁷⁴

With his City Housing Corporation formed, Alexander Bing had Clarence Stein and Henry Wright travel overseas to Britain to research the garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn, as well as the architecturally-acclaimed Hampstead Garden Suburb, and personally learn from the insight of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin.⁴⁷⁵ Judging from Wright's surviving reports from the research trips to Britain, the men highlighted the need for distinct recreational and organized physical cultural spaces as they documented the financial achievements and failings of the English

⁴⁷⁴ McCullough, *A Path for Kindred Spirits*, 27-43; MacKaye, *The New Exploration*.

⁴⁷⁵ Parsons, "British and American Community Design," 131.

communities. Henry Wright wrote “conclusively” in a 1923 report that an American garden city, planned to the English standards could be created and become a financially successful project, while not explicitly stating his reasons for making such a decisive conclusion.⁴⁷⁶ Like English garden city discourse, Wright asserted that the “fundamental housing problem” in twentieth-century American urban planning remained “supplying adequate,” affordable homes for “clerical” and “manual” workers. Yet, the role of prescribing physical cultural spaces occupied the attention of Wright, according to his trip reports. He surmised that a key, stated component in remedying the housing problem was the necessary allocation of park and recreational spaces: “Questions of noise, dirt, healthful green and recreational facilities enter into the housing problem quite as much as...the size and arrangement of the individual house or apartment.” In New York City and the large urban cities of the country, Wright wrote, “[R]ecreational facilities have been completely forgotten,” and the recent laudable attempts for better apartments “fall far short of filling the need for proper recreation, community life, or even privacy.” Developing a garden city would not only serve as an important step in urban decentralization and the organization of social life, but would allow planners to consider “the relation of recreational facilities and homes...” Wright’s reports spoke of recreation spaces and practices as emergent cultural ideas necessary to ensure the health of the modern community residents.⁴⁷⁷ Recreation signified the physical cultural link between the healthfulness of the community, its housing, and its relation to the larger regional plan for urban

⁴⁷⁶ “What did the founders of Welwyn learn from the L experiment,” Folder 27 – Aug. 5, 1924, Box 1, Henry Wright Papers, Collection #2736, CURMC.

⁴⁷⁷ “Garden City Studies, Part I,” Folder 17 – August 28, 1923, Box 1, Henry Wright Papers, CURMC.

decentralization. In the planning of American garden cities by the CHC and RPAA, there were emergent and residual cultural ideas of recreation and physical culture embedded within their plans: residual forms of “wilderness” recreation from their regionalist visions exemplified by the Appalachian Trail project, and emergent forms of modern sport and physical culture practices within the prescribed spaces of the new planning communities.

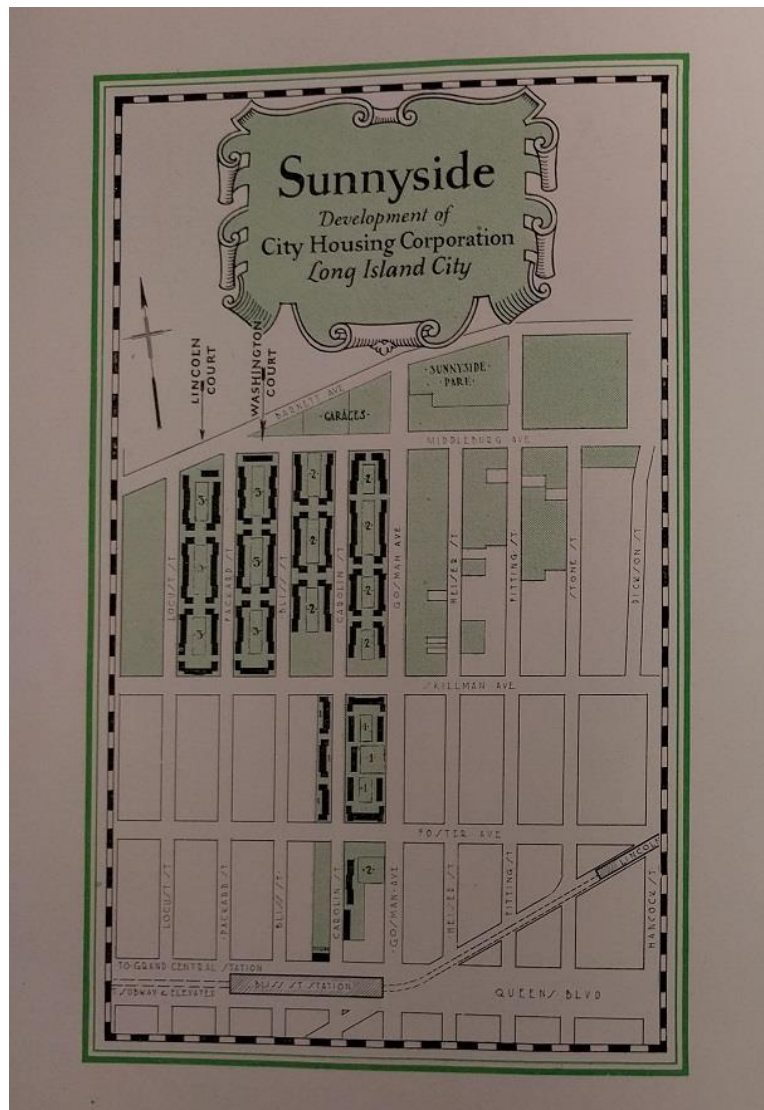


Figure 5.1 – Diagram of City Housing Corporation’s Sunnyside Gardens community, published in a CHC 1924 pamphlet. “Low Priced Garden Homes, Next Door to Manhattan,” Folder 10 – Sunnyside, Queens, 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

The Biopolitical Planning of Sunnyside Gardens, New York

It was in their approach to designing their Sunnyside Gardens project that the CHC's imagined role of health, recreation and physical culture emerged as biopolitical prescriptions, for they became the central elements of the layout that were to implant dominant notions of traditional American democratic living and middle-class, gendered values of family life and domesticity. Documenting their activities and objectives later in life, Clarence Stein wrote that "Sunnyside was an experiment in community building far more than in housing." They intended Sunnyside "as a step toward the creation of an American Garden City. Its social purpose was apparent as much in its physical form as in its community organization." The idea was, at its foundation, "to create a setting in which a democratic community might grow"; to supply "the setting for community gathering and activities" they associated with traditional, healthy American democratic living, within an environment that would be controlled, gently regulated—Stein wrote that the company "did its best not to be paternalistic," even as the company established regulations such as denying residents the right to change the appearance of houses—and administered by the CHC. In its relation to the preserved "wilderness" recreational spaces of the Appalachian region project, Stein, Wright, and Bing linked their understandings of a "healthy" American community to a racial and class homogenous built environment. This community building approach conformed to middle class values of nuclear, domestic family life,

democratic cooperation, and access to prescribed open and green spaces for the purposes of proper recreation, sport and leisure.⁴⁷⁸

For these reasons, the CHC planners articulated the biopolitics of Sunnyside's plan firstly through by arranging houses and apartments in relation to the community's preserved green and open space, so that the garden spaces of houses and building adjoined to common spaces and installed recreational, playground, and sporting spaces. The underlying idea was to bring traditional spaces of familial leisure (the garden) in proximity with spaces of communal leisure (the central common space of each block, evoking the New England central common) for the purposes of inspiring resident to live democratically. Unlike the English garden cities, where the surrounding agricultural belt was a key spatial vehicle for inculcate healthy pastoral physical culture in the form of working with the land, the urban location of the Sunnyside project precluded the preservation of a surrounding belt of agricultural or countryside land, and the speed of development meant that "the social setting grew and developed as we went along." The CHC purchased over 50 acres of land in Queens from the Pennsylvania & Long Island Railroad company, a portion of which it then sold to accumulate a financial "nest egg for the building of the Garden City of the future." According to Stein, immediately following the land purchase housing units were planned and constructed, so that by 1928 the CHC built 1,202 family units on the Sunnyside property. The speed of housing construction meant that no wholesale plan for the entire Sunnyside community was ever completed,

⁴⁷⁸ "Organization of the Community," manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 3 September 1947, Folder 9 - Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation), 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; "Sunnyside as a Community" manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 30-31 August 1947, Folder 9 - Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation), 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

leaving the deemed “healthfulness” of the community to be dependent upon the arrangement of housing and community forms, and the incorporation of modern physical cultural practices such as sporting courts. Thus, when Stein wrote that Sunnyside was planned as a place to "bring neighbors together in small and large pleasant groups," to provide "places to play" and "places for social, education, political purposes," his biopolitical vision led to him to imagine the plentiful garden, common park, playground, and spaces would restore the nostalgic, residual arrangements of the mythologized American pastoral village, in combination with the modern procurement of structure, organized sport and leisure.⁴⁷⁹

The planners imbued the laying out of garden and common park space in terms of they could reproduce white middle class family dynamics and the association housewife ideal. According to historian Mary Ryan, American middle-class identity was constructed in the nineteenth-century and centered on the domestic relations of the nuclear family, where the solidification of gendered “spheres”—with men occupying public, civic life, and women occupying the home—resulted in an ideology of domesticity that would come to define white middle-class living.⁴⁸⁰ This link between the structure of the nuclear family and its reproduction of a middle-class domestic ideology endured in refashioned forms well into “domestic revival” of post-World War II suburban America, when the politics of the Cold War and the “nuclear

⁴⁷⁹ “Sunnyside – The Land and Its Cost,” manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 26 August 1947, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; “Planning Sunnyside – The General Plan,” manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 27 August 1947, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; “Sunnyside as a Community,” CURMC.

⁴⁸⁰ Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

age” fed into the promotion of traditional familial arrangements.⁴⁸¹ As Friedrich Engels and recently Stephanie Coontz explain, the meaning of family life has long been embroiled in social reproduction, with late nineteenth and early twentieth-century middle class domestic ideology molded around the family as personifying class position and motherhood as the regulator of domestic activities.⁴⁸² Yet, as Coontz later explained, this construction of middle-class identity around the nuclear family entailed a “nostalgia trap” of imagining a past vision of the “traditional family” as “an historical amalgam of structures, values, and behaviors that never co-existed in the same time and place.” Thus, as the Sunnyside planners structured home, leisure, and park space according to how they could enhance intimacy within families and the mother’s ability to be available to their playing children, they embedded their community design with a domestic ideology that was in part derived from a mythologization of the traditional middle-class family relations of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸³ The planners structured and prescribed the home and leisure spaces of Sunnyside according to their desires to regulate modern family relations, and nostalgia for a past American “golden age” of the traditional family where mothers could watch their children play in more natural environment.

By prescribing physical cultural and leisure spaces in terms of how they improved the ability for family “housewives” to watch in the kitchen or garden as

⁴⁸¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

⁴⁸² Friedrich Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (New York: International Publishers, 1942); Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (New York: Verso, 1988).

⁴⁸³ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 9.

they children played, the CHC's Sunnyside plans imbued their visions of healthy embodied living with the domestic, nostalgic ideology of white middle-class identity. Yet, their plans mobilized not just a modern, emergent re-construction of white middle class identity in a new built environment, but its relation to a residual understanding of the healthfulness of green spaces a la more natural environment. As environmental historian Courtney Wiersema explains, Euroamerican settlers during the nineteenth century perceived natural spaces such as western tallgrass prairie in terms of their significance in fostering healthy progeny. The "act of reproduction," for Euroamerican settlers on the prairie, linked their bodies to their perceptions of the fertility of the natural environment, leading them to understanding the preservation of family in terms of their relation to environmental spaces.⁴⁸⁴ A similar kind of relation fed into the housing designs at Sunnyside, as the planners continuously framed the construction of houses as affordable "family units" for lower middle class families who could not afford the more expensive housing in New York, but also in terms of how each family unit afforded access to the green and common park and leisure amenities of the community.⁴⁸⁵

To effect a community environment healthier and aesthetically more pleasing than the "few dingy rooms" available to low income families in nearby New York and the "ugly disorder of the individual speculative boxes that lined the newer areas of Queens," Stein and Wright arranged the houses of Sunnyside as blocks of single and multi-family buildings, each surrounding a common green that was landscaped

⁴⁸⁴ Wiersema, "A Fruitful Plain," 678-699.

⁴⁸⁵ "House Units at Sunnyside," 10 September 1947, Folder 9 – Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation) – 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

with trees, bushes and shrubs, and planned to include "sand piles and play places for children...restful benches and shelters for the mothers..." The CHC limited the type of houses that could be built and standardize the housing styles in order to lower construction costs, and the planners stressed the economy and efficiency as a modern, yet healthy and democratic community where "housewives" can have "adorable," simplified yet scientifically-advanced kitchens and American white families with modest incomes could live in a "well-built," modern and "attractive" home. The planners believed the houses, built according to Arts and Crafts architectural and aesthetic values—in a manner that would've delighted William Morris himself, Sunnyside promotional pamphlets highlighted how each home would specifically designed for increased access to sunlight and "fresh air," and "[c]heap, useless ornamentation" would be eliminated to enhance its "charm"—signified a healthier and more economical alternative to the congested living spaces of New York and other large cities. Within such a planned housing layout, residents would live healthier and more efficiently through access to a landscaped and administered central green, houses would simultaneously be more affordable and render a modest profit to CHC investors, and the community itself could be promoted as providing attractive houses to low income families while reinforcing traditional national values of the nuclear family, female domesticity, and the promise of a modernizing America.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ "Organization of the Community," CURMC; "Low Price Garden Homes, Next Door to Manhattan," Sunnyside Garden promotional pamphlet, Folder 10 - Sunnyside, Queens, 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; "House Units at Sunnyside," manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 10 September 1947, Folder 9 - Sunnyside (City Housing Corporation), 1924, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC;

The particular layout of the houses, in direct relation to prescribed spaces for family leisure and play, were to be one of the primary layout features facilitating the environmental and social healthfulness of Sunnyside as a “typical American community.”⁴⁸⁷ With the community situated in Queens, the CHC planned Sunnyside without a surrounding belt of agricultural land as at the first English garden city at Letchworth. While acknowledging that an “independent, self-contained Garden City” would “best serve to relieve the congestion of Manhattan as well as relieve the fatigue of workers,” the CHC decided to plan a “more limited experiment contiguous to present city developments.” Sunnyside represented an opportunity to design middle class and Arts and Crafts ideals of “adequate living space, light, ventilation, privacy, and economic grouping” within an urban space restricted by established street layouts, municipal laws and utilities. Perhaps shaped by such spatial restrictions and long term regional planning goals in conjunction with “wilderness” projects such as the Appalachian Trail, notions of open space materialized as park and recreation provisions within Sunnyside’s plan. Stein, Wright and Bing planned for Sunnyside to provide “liberal” allocations of recreation space, and noted multiple different kinds of recreation provisions: communal playgrounds for young children, community buildings adjacent to athletic fields, and a larger park that would function as a landscaped “permanent agricultural land”. This “permanent agricultural land,” however, was linked to modern, emergent sporting, recreation and leisure practices in green space. The planners still allocated a “permanently maintained belt of open land” adjacent to the community, but wrote of its potential

⁴⁸⁷ “Low Price Garden Homes, Next Door to Manhattan,” CURMC.

uses for family gatherings, dwelling yards and gardens, park and recreation space. Reflecting the cultural complexity of appropriating English garden city principles within American urban contexts, the CHC conceptualized the purposes of Sunnyside's "open land" as a mechanism to "separate and protect the community from undesirable encroachments and preserve its identity," but also as spaces where they could prescribe healthy, modern practices of sport, recreation and leisure within a landscaped green space.⁴⁸⁸

The prominence and specific allocation of sport, recreation and leisure practices within the planning of Sunnyside—in tandem with landscaped park space—reinforced the community's mission as a built environment where middle class values of healthy living would be inculcated in part through prescribed physical cultural practices that would simultaneously function to discipline and regulate embodied activities. The planners specifically laid out tennis and basketball courts, one sporting practice holding strong cultural ties to muscular Christian and White amateur sporting ethos, the other a middle and upper-class sporting practice that could provide healthful vitality to middle class workers in urban environments.⁴⁸⁹ The result was a contradiction between the social intentions of Sunnyside's housing arrangements with those of the open and physical cultural spaces. Following the model of the English garden cities and Howard's reading of Kropotkin, Stein framed Sunnyside dwellings

⁴⁸⁸ "Preliminary Study of a Proposed Garden Community in the New York City Region," manuscript written by Alexander M. Bing, Henry Wright, and Clarence S. Stein, Folder 14 – "Bing-Stein-Wright-Study of Proposed Garden Community 1923," Box 5, Series 3, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁴⁸⁹ "Sunnyside as a Community," CURMC; Nathan Titman, "Taking Punishment Gladly: Bill Tilden's Performances of the Unruly Male Body," *Journal of Sport History* 3 (2014): 447-466; Pamela Grundy, Murray Nelson and Mark Dyreson, "The Emergence of Basketball as an American National Pastime: From a Popular Participant Sport to a Spectacle of Nationhood," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 1-2 (2014): 134-155.

as “co-operative housing” constructed for the sake of good houses rather than profit. The “physical arrangement of the homes,” Stein argued, expressed the community’s economic and “spiritual value”: “[w]e must plan for a different and better type of community.” Yet, as he explained the amenities of Sunnyside’s plan that were important improvements than those currently offered in most New York City neighborhoods, Stein underlined the availability of sporting and recreation practices. “There is no problem more difficult of solution in our cities,” Stein asserted, “than that of recreation.” The planners of Sunnyside allocated spaces for controlled leisure and recreation, prescribing them within a controlled built environment that was designed to provide “privacy” and escape from urban congestion. In this they articulated forms of physical culture and embodiment that were contextually synonymous with whiteness and class exclusion. Borrowing the words of historian Lawrence Culver, leisure in early twentieth-century American history functioned as a “restricted privilege,” and at Sunnyside were shaped by the planners’ own middle class, biopolitical motivations for creating ideal conditions for health. Unlike the dance halls and commercial leisure establishments of the urban working class and immigrant groups at the time, the healthy recreation practices of Sunnyside were imbued with white, middle class values, designed to provide rest, recuperation, and safety for children and families.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2-4; Randy D. McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure Among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), , 3-4; Mary Dyreson, “The Emergence of Consumer Culture and the Transformation of Physical Culture: American Sport in the 1920s,” *Journal of Sport History* 3 (1989): 261-281; Kathryn Grover, eds., *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

Arguably the most prominent form of physical culture implanted within Sunnyside's layout was playgrounds, slides and swings for children. Particularly in urban centers such as New York, the scientific study and reforming of urban playgrounds during the 1920s entailed the supervising and regulating of youth play for the purposes of cultivating healthier, more efficient young bodies.⁴⁹¹ The administering of playgrounds was a prominent feature of CHC's governance over the community. Though Stein later wrote that they tried their "best not to be paternalistic," the company early on administered the formation of resident associations, and employed directors to oversee each prescribed playground.⁴⁹² In one of CHC's promotional pamphlets for their Sunnyside community, they highlighted the procuring of "sand piles and play places for children" in close proximity to "restful benches and shelters for the mothers," reproducing traditional gender roles through the allocation of spaces for physical culture. The objectives of providing "places to play" was central to the Sunnyside experiment, and the planners designed the central playgrounds in relation to each housing unit's garden to foster a sense of privacy and allow "housewives" the ability to watch their children playing outside.⁴⁹³ As they reduced the amount of necessary space devoted to housing to 28% of Sunnyside's acreage, the planners devoted the remaining space to children's playgrounds, along with plots for tennis courts, basketball courts, slides and swings,

⁴⁹¹ "Sunnyside as a Community," CURMC; Gagen, "Making America Flesh," 417-442; Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at Play: an American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 2-3. For the history of children's experiences in American society, see N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, eds., *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁴⁹² "Organization of the Community," CURMC.

⁴⁹³ "Sunnyside as a Community," CURMC; "Low Price Garden Homes, Next Door to Manhattan," CURMC.

and flower gardens. By grouping houses firstly for the Arts and Crafts principle of prioritizing for “maximum air and light,” Stein and Wright reserved the open space for prescribed, organized, and healthy play, sport and physical culture.⁴⁹⁴

Stein’s written accounts of the Sunnyside planning, along with the minutes of the RPAA, made no mention of race or the new communities being open to African Americans or other minority groups, only that they strove to create a healthier, still “typical American community” while experimenting with the garden city model of development. As they promoted the open, green and communal spaces of Sunnyside as “healthier” spaces to live—and antithetical to the “congested,” unhealthy, inefficient urban centers—the planners undergirded Sunnyside’s prescribed green space with the residual values of agrarian Republicanism, a racialized ideology that mythologized the independent, virtuous, active farmer, in constant relation to man’s contact with “nature”, as the embodiment of healthy American living.⁴⁹⁵ Their articulation of “democracy”, in this context of a class and racially homogenous community, signified a Turnerian restoration of contact with nature that would, in turn, create a more co-operative, democratic community of Americans.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ “Co-operative Housing—The Architect’s Viewpoint,” *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen’s Magazine*, August 1925, 168-170, Folder 19 - "Cooperative Housing, The Architect's Viewpoint, address at Cooperative League, 1925," Box 5, Series 3, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁴⁹⁵ Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*, 19-20; Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Lilly and Wait, 1832); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Adam Wesley Dean, *An Agrarian Republic: Farming, Antislavery Politics, and Nature Parks in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

⁴⁹⁶ Multiple scholars note the historically contest nature of “democracy” as a concept, noting the multiple meanings that arise in its definition and the needs to contextualize the idea of “democracy” in order to account for its political and cultural resonance at particular historical moments. See Milja Kurki, “Democracy and Conceptual Contestability: Reconsidering Conceptions of Democracy in Democracy Promotion,” *International Studies Review* 3 (2010): 362-386; Oliver Hidalgo, “Conceptual History and Politics: Is the Concept of Democracy Essentially Contested?” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 2 (2008): 176-201.

Bolstering the residual, racialized ideals of healthy, democratic living near open spaces was Sunnyside's design as a racially exclusive, middle-class community. In assessing the cross-section of Sunnyside's first residents, Stein acknowledged that they (the CHC) were not establishing Sunnyside in order to remove poor families from New York slums and rehouse them in the new community. The reason was the necessity to acquire capital support, and the CHC feared that aligning the project with the intention of removing the poor from slums would not entice enough outside capital to support the venture's growth. Aligned with availability of middle class leisure and recreation practices—gardening, tennis, landscaped park spaces with pergolas, private playgrounds—Sunnyside's urban environmental setup added a distinct biopolitical dimension to the values of the suburban "bourgeois utopias" of the period, becoming an environment for cultivating a Anglo-American middle class way of life that personified their emergent visions of modern, healthy living, structured to instill those healthy values within its residents.⁴⁹⁷ This vision of suburban, bourgeois health was imagined in relation to congested "unhealthiness" of 1920s New York, an urban environment in which the African American population, thanks in large part to waves of incoming migrant from the South, rapidly increased from 91,000 in 1910 to 327,000 in 1930. The absence of racial inclusion in the planning and setup of Sunnyside suggests the deeply Anglo-American, middle class character of the CHC's vision for their Sunnyside Gardens project, and inherent racial

⁴⁹⁷ "Organization of the Community," CURMC; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, x-xi.

and class tensions within their biopolitical intentions in constructing the community.⁴⁹⁸

For this reason, I argue that, like Letchworth during the English garden city movement, City Housing Corporation's planning of Sunnyside became a spatial manifestation of modern biopower. The community's intentions united modern town planning with the planners' residual nostalgia for natural environment through the prescription of landscaped green space and modern physical cultural practices for the instilling of healthy living. With plentiful park, garden and common green space, organized sporting spaces such as tennis courts, basketball courts, playgrounds for children and benches for watchful housewives, and modern, sanitary, and affordable housing, the communities were promoted as "healthful places to live in, efficient places to work in."⁴⁹⁹ Yet, what made Sunnyside "healthful" as a place of living and "efficient" as a place of work" was shaped by the planners' nostalgic imaginings of the healthful physical cultural and embodied habits of traditional Appalachian and New England way of life. The garden city became a useful community model for experimenting with how to restore those residual relations within a modern, implicitly regulated built environment.

⁴⁹⁸ James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 119-120; Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), 156-157; James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 4.

⁴⁹⁹ "For Release in Morning Papers November 16th, 1927," Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

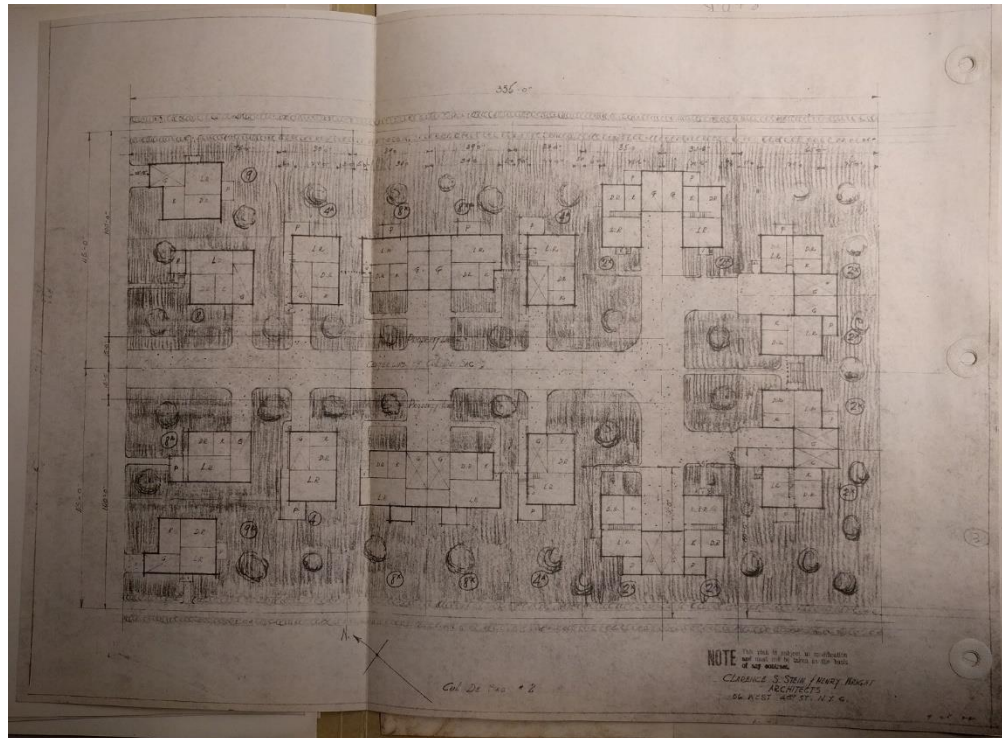


Figure 5.2 – Plans for “Cul-de-Sac” layout of Radburn community, hand-drawn by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. See “Cul-de-Sac #2 Plan,” Folder 19 – Radburn plans, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

Radburn, New Jersey: Biopolitical Planning “for the Motor Age”

By 1924, Lewis Mumford believed that MacKaye’s Appalachian recreational imaginary provided the necessary residual cultural elements for their future, emergent garden cities qua regional cities. With MacKaye’s modern conviction in the need to restore and rationalize the recreational and physical cultural vitality of wilderness, and residual nostalgia for the social and environmental arrangements exemplified by the colonial New England village—a community form he believed was organically unified in meaning and embodied experience with its surrounding natural environment—he had the insight and social engineering knowledge needed for

structuring a healthy social and cultural life in the new planned regional cities in a way that Stein and Wright could not. Writing to MacKaye that year, Mumford wrote,

Both [Henry] Wright and Clarence [Stein], a couple weeks ago, made the confession that they could plan the physical garden cities, but had nothing to put into them – couldn't visualize them on their social and civic side. This is where you come in Benton, and this is why I hark back again and again to the Appalachian and the New Colonial ideas. We want motive power and content for the program; and we must be audacious enough, it seems to me, to suggest a new way of life.⁵⁰⁰

The “new way of life” of Mumford’s regionalist vision was one with physical culture as its dominant fulcrum. The idea was to restore residual relations between people’s active bodies and natural environments by planning and creating developments such as the Appalachian Trail, where residents would be re-introduced to a healthier relation with nature through recreational practices such as hiking and camping. Within the planned communities themselves, residents would be inspired by the “motive power” of traditional virtues of American frontier egalitarianism and democracy, and bolstered local opportunities for modernized sporting and physical cultural spaces and practices. Yet, they would also be modern communities, with the technological advancements and conveniences of the typical American middle-class suburbanite. This tension between the biopolitical prescription of modern living spaces and nostalgic visions of outdoor recreation would manifest themselves in the overtly culturally dominant physical cultural practices installed in City Housing Corporation’s Radburn community project.

⁵⁰⁰ Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism*, 117; Letter from Lewis Mumford to Benton MacKaye, 18 December 1924, Folder 5989, Box 79, Series II: Correspondence: Letter from Lewis Mumford, Lewis Mumford Papers, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

This focus on modern, dominant sport, park, and physical cultural spaces within what would become the town of Radburn was structured by the planners' desire to design a community that safeguarded its inhabitants from dangerous, unhealthy automobile traffic. Historians of Radburn and its significance in the garden city movement have long framed the planned community as an important moment in site planning's response to people's increasing reliance on the automobile as a transportation technology. A 1934 study on the community's plan asserted that Radburn's design "was based on the assumptions that most families want a home, and that motor vehicles are an integral part of present-day living and are likely to continue to be for many years to come."⁵⁰¹ While we tend to focus on the surge in automobile reliance following the Second World War, historians such as Christopher Wells remind us that by the interwar period cars were beginning to dominate both urban and rural landscapes and were becoming a consumer-based fixture of transportation for the middle and upper-middle classes.⁵⁰² By the mid-1920s, well over three quarters of the world's automobiles were purchased in the United States, and one of the key, emergent ideas underlying the construction of Radburn was the possibility that middle class families could own an automobile, as well as live in a planned community where social contact and recreation could be guaranteed without the risk of children and parents being exposed to hazardous, congested thoroughfare traffic.⁵⁰³ The automobile, however, was embraced by planners as well as reform-minded industrialists such as Henry Ford, who viewed it as a transport technology that could

⁵⁰¹ Hudson, *Radburn*, v.

⁵⁰² Christopher W. Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

⁵⁰³ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 168.

aid the decentralization of population. Indeed, in the minds of many Progressive Era reformers, including settlement house activist Jane Addams, thought the overcrowded city could be decentralized through such “rapid transport.”⁵⁰⁴ More than this, the spread of automobile transportation dialectically influenced national interest in recreational practices in natural landscapes and “wild nature,” as Americans found the ability to travel long distances increasingly possible through the new, emergent means of transport.⁵⁰⁵ Raymond Unwin himself, speaking in 1925 about the causes of urban congestion, cited the automobile along with the radio as technologies that could potentially aid the decentralization cause.⁵⁰⁶ This approach to the significance of automobile, as an emergent transportation technology that is potentially the key harbinger for effective regional planning, held important consequences for the prescription of physical culture and definition of healthy living within City Housing Corporation’s Radburn planned community.

The advocacy of the automobile in terms of its ability to spur the decentralization of urban populations restricted the prescription of dominant, modern recreation, physical culture, and sporting spaces in City Housing’s second planned community at Radburn. Lewis Mumford engaged with automobile technology as they formulated their perspective on how best to reform the urban metropolis, while others, such as the designer Norman Bel Geddes, embraced the transport technology

⁵⁰⁴ Peter J. Ling, *American and the Automobile: Technology, Reform and Social Change* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 64-65.

⁵⁰⁵ Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 19.

⁵⁰⁶ “Decries the Tall Building as Cause of City Congestion,” *Evening Transcript* (Boston), 22 April 1925, Folder 3 – “International Federation for Housing and Town Planning, Garden Cities and Town Planning,” Box 70, Series 4, John Nolen Papers, CURMC.

and fast highways in their visions of cities of the future.⁵⁰⁷ Benton MacKaye, perceiving the new community through a regional planning perspective that included his Appalachian Trail project, called Radburn a “key” example of community planning appropriate within his vision of “townless highways.” It would be the first town to be planned on the assumption that through motor traffic must be completely separated from the communal aspects of the environment.”⁵⁰⁸ MacKaye’s idea was that regional planning would allow for the beautification of both highway and community through the ordering and maintenance of wilderness and open spaces in their relation to built environment. By planning a town, such as Radburn, on the “assumption that through motor traffic must be completely separate from the communal aspects of the environment,” both natural recreational opportunities and community physical cultural practices could be prescribed and regulated by regional planning and administration.⁵⁰⁹ What resulted was a community layout that incorporated self-regulating park, green, and physical cultural spaces in tandem with town planning measures for safeguarding residents and their children from vehicular dangers and congestion. With the planners’ nostalgia for recreational wilderness spaces included in their broader regional development plans, the physical cultural and biopolitical dimensions of Radburn emerged with a more modern, dominant, middle class tinge.

⁵⁰⁷ Cliff Ellis, “Lewis Mumford and Norman Bel Geddes: the Highway, the City and the Future,” *Planning Perspectives* 1 (2005): 51-68.

⁵⁰⁸ “Discussion of the Possibilities of Regional Planning,” written at Hudson Guild, 17-19 October 1930, Folder 12 – RPAA, Box 8, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁵⁰⁹ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 153.

Radburn deviated from Sunnyside Gardens as a CHC community project in that it was discussed as much more in line with RPAA principles of regional planning: as a “new town—newer than the garden cities, and the first major innovation in town planning since they were built” in part from their incorporation of the “superblock” and what became colloquially known as “The Radburn Plan.”⁵¹⁰ The superblock was Clarence Stein and Henry Wright’s method of bounding a large block of houses and community spaces around vehicular thoroughfares to prevent motor traffic from entering the housing and living spaces of the community. With a landscaped park and green and recreational spaces placed in the center, houses were clustered along the perimeter of the block, their gardens facing towards the internal park and leisure space. The backs of houses were connected to dead-end, “cul de sac” feeder roads linked to the trafficked thoroughfare outside the superblock. Each superblock, then, was connected to others via a system of under passes and trails through each center park, allowing residents to interact without crossing a street or come into contact with automobile traffic. The idea was to separate motor traffic from community life, becoming a kind of “highwayless town” that MacKaye envisioned. The central park and green space, Henry Wright wrote, was like “the hole in the donut,” forming “part of a continuous green backbone, or framework of community.”⁵¹¹ When studied strictly as a town planning strategy, historians note

⁵¹⁰ "Radburn and Sunnyside: Block Planning for Open Spaces," manuscript written by Clarence Stein, 5 September 1947, Folder 24 – Radburn, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁵¹¹ “The Radburn Idea,” Folder 9 – I.B. The Radburn Idea, Cities to Come, Box 10, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; Byron R. Hanke, “Land-Use Intensity, A Guidance System for Housing and Urban Development,” Testimony before National Commission on Urban Problems, hearing on zoning, Houston, TX, 10 August 1967, Folder 9 - I.B. The Radburn Idea, Cities to Come, Box 10, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

that Stein and Wright's superblock model was a major innovation in the evolution of garden city designs, for it offered a way of maintaining focus on the relation between home and green/park/leisure/recreational space while adapting to the rapid rise in automobile traffic in urban communities.⁵¹²

When studied in terms of its physical cultural qualities and relation the RPAA's overall residual nostalgia for regional wilderness—exemplified by the Appalachian Trail project—the superblock functioned to organize and orient the Radburn community in terms of its incorporation of landscaped park and physical cultural spaces as modern spaces for healthy, racially homogenous middle-class culture. The wholesale planning of prescribed social and physical cultural activities differentiated Radburn from most white, class-exclusive suburbs of the era. As CHC Secretary Charles Ascher put it to historian Daniel Schaffer, in Radburn “everything was planned.”⁵¹³ The CHC included the cul-de-sac in its laying out of feeder streets in the superblocks, which Stein credited to Henry Wright's learning of the developed street patterns at Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities. The cul-de-sac street model, Stein retrospectively remarked, was a form they derived from the patterns of colonial American villages where houses fronted on central common greens, allowing CHC planners to starkly differentiate Radburn streets from the predominant urban

⁵¹² Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 169; Arnold, *The New Deal in the Suburbs*, 15-16; Parsons, “British and American Community Design,” 139-146; Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement*, 55; Brian Ladd, *Autophobia: Love and Hate in the Automotive Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 78.

⁵¹³ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 177.

and suburban grid patterns of American cities, and remain in line with Mumford and MacKaye's likening for the New England village model of community life.⁵¹⁴

Organized sports and recreation practices proliferated in the early years of Radburn, with two swimming pools, three playgrounds, five basketball courts, four tennis courts, four ball fields, archery grounds and summer camp facilities, all places in relation to roughly twenty acres of internal parkland for the community's two superblocks and 1,500 residents. While basketball was by then played by the urban working class and immigrant groups, it was a sport long associated with Young Men's Christian Association and assimilationist programs that utilized the game to teach and impart traditional American amateur, and healthy capitalist ethics of bodily discipline and the virtues of hard work.⁵¹⁵ While CHC did not necessarily build a field for football and other, more aggressive popular sports at the time, popular sports, including basketball and baseball were integral to the refashioning of white masculine ideals of American nationhood.⁵¹⁶ The creation of playgrounds, meanwhile, was a fixture in Progressive urban reform programs, as middle-class reformers tried promote healthy lifestyles and regulate working class youth bodies through organized physical activities and particular forms of play.⁵¹⁷ Professional playground, sport, and recreation directors were hired by CHC to administer and oversee the town's available sports and recreational activities, an articulation of the period's increasing

⁵¹⁴ Untitled manuscript written by Clarence Stein, Folder 24 – Radburn, Box 1, Series 2, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁵¹⁵ Pamela Grundy, Murray Nelson, and Mark Dyreson, "The Emergence of Basketball as an American National Pastime: From a Popular Participant Sport to a Spectacle of Nationhood," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 1-2 (2014): 138-139; Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁵¹⁶ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

⁵¹⁷ Park, "Setting the Scene," 1427-1452; Gagen, "Making America Flesh," 417-442.

professionalization and rationalization of spaces for “healthy” physical activity.⁵¹⁸ Meanwhile, City Housing utilized space for archery and summer camp facilities, practices that in the 1920s were often closely associated with the re-construction of modern, white national identity through the co-optation of mythologized American Indian activities and interaction with spaces of “nature.”⁵¹⁹ Whereas “recreational” was conceptualized by the RPAA’s Appalachian Trail project as “that which gives access to the region’s natural environment and contact with its natural resources,” within the actual Radburn community layout dominant, middle-class, white sporting practices and recreational opportunities prevailed as CHC’s primary avenue for installing and maintaining “a healthy and stimulating environment.”⁵²⁰ The superblock, with its close attention paid to the separation of automobile use from internal community intercourse, helped to structure the available and use of community open space towards modern, dominant physical cultural practices while keeping the community design in line with the RPAA’s ongoing regionalist objectives.

The physical cultural practices and spaces of Radburn socially and spatially reproduced and reinforced the overall racial and class homogeneity explicit in the intention of the town’s design and administration. Stein wrote that their intention in planning Radburn was the creation of an economically, occupationally, and racially balanced community: the installation of an environment “setting where a

⁵¹⁸ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 175, 177.

⁵¹⁹ Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 95-127; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

⁵²⁰ “The Regional Planning Association of America,” CURMC.

democratic,” cooperative and agreeable “community might grow.⁵²¹ Yet, Stein wrote possibly as early as 1920 that his overall goal was to help preserve the “family hearthside” and the “traditional village type home” as a key archetype in town planning, as well as promoting affordable houses to “the man of modest means...”⁵²² This was a political and cultural climate in which eugenics arguments linking ideal environmental conditions to racial purity and heredity proliferated within popular culture and the values of the white middle-class, and government immigration policies were instituted to police racialized conceptions of modern American nation.⁵²³ Thus, the first manager of the Radburn community, John O. Walker, stated that the CHC “tried to get people who fit together,” which quickly translating into a predominantly white, middle class, Protestant population, while CHC realtors reportedly dissuaded interested Jewish and African American families from purchasing a Radburn home.⁵²⁴ What largely separated Radburn from other predominantly white, upper class suburbs of the time was City Housing’s ongoing oversight and installation of organized, regulated sporting and recreational practices and spaces in the community, causing the company to benevolently regulate their overtly white, bourgeois conceptions of healthy living through the structuring of play and physical culture within the innovative superblock layout.

⁵²¹ “Community Planned Development Conceptions,” Folder 9 – I.B. The Radburn Idea, Cities to Come, Box 10, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC; “Organization of the Community,” CURMC.

⁵²² Untitled four-page manuscript, Folder 6 – (1920?), Box 1, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

⁵²³ Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell, eds., *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006); Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 113-115.

⁵²⁴ Schaffer, *Garden Cities for America*, 177.

The arrival of economic depression in 1929 forced a reduction on City Housing's available capital, stunted the expansion of Radburn's acreage, halted any anticipated industrial support or financial capacity to purchase undeveloped rural land surrounding the community, and left the community's prescribed spaces for inspiring "healthy" living habits to be dominated by landscaped park spaces for feminized leisure and modern physical cultural practices that reproduced notions of white, middle-class identity.⁵²⁵ The depression dissolved the chances of an encircling belt of an undeveloped countryside, and stopped the construction of Radburn housing at four hundred homes. Apart from the community venture's imagined role in any future wide scale regional redevelopment, the central common parks, green spaces, and physical activity practices of the two constructed superblocks represented the key biopolitical strategies left to inspire the white, middle-class families of Radburn to live healthier, "typical American" lives. As Kermit Parsons put it, Radburn "stumbled and failed financially."⁵²⁶ By the 1930s, Radburn had become, like Sunnyside Gardens, a racially homogenous, bourgeois "bedroom suburb" of the New York metropolitan area, stopping short of the CHC's goal, shared by the RPAA, in creating smaller, carefully planned cities that, in the words of Mumford, could

⁵²⁵ For useful histories of the social effects of the Great Depression, particularly the role of leisure during the context, see Susan Currell, *The March of Spare Time: The Problem and Promise of Leisure in the Great Depression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Elliot A. Rosen, *Roosevelt, the Great Depression, and the Economics of Recovery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009); Gene Smiley, *Rethinking the Great Depression* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002).

⁵²⁶ Kermit C. Parsons, "Clarence Stein's Variations on the Garden City Theme by Ebenezer Howard," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 2 (1998): 130.

“perform effectively all of their social and economic functions.”⁵²⁷ Though the members of the RPAA held a residual nostalgia for the healthfulness and recreational opportunities afforded by wilderness spaces, the common parks of Radburn, in close relation with constructed fields and facilities for organized physical culture, were overtly modern and dominant cultural forms as they served to structure and rationalize modern urban life through emergent ideas of healthy living and a biopolitical impulse for regulating the activities of white families “of modest means.”

Planning “Like a State”: The Federal Greenbelt Town Program

The Great Depression, however, shifted rather than cut short the endurance and trajectory of garden city planning principles in American town planning. By the 1930s, the influence of the international garden city movement ideas on the healthfulness of a planned built environment balancing town and country spaces reached the social and economic reform policies of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s (FDR) “New Deal” Administration through the creation of the federal greenbelt town program.⁵²⁸ The greenbelt town program was a housing and

⁵²⁷ Lewis Mumford, “The Fate of Garden Cities,” *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* XV (1927): 37-38; Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 170; Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement*, 58.

⁵²⁸ There is a vast, expansive literature on the history of FDR’s New Deal administration and policies. For a cursory listing, see William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Paul K. Conkin, *The New Deal* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1975); Michael A. Hiltzik, *The New Deal: A Modern History* (New York: The Free Press, 2011); Jason S. Smith, *A Concise History of the New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kiran K. Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Joseph P. Lash, *Dealers and Dreamers: A New Look at the New Deal* (New York: Doubleday, 1988); Patrick D. Reagan, *Designing a New America: The Origins of New Deal Planning, 1890-1943* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

community building project based within the Resettlement Administration, one of the New Deal “alphabet agencies” tasked with the resettling of poor farming off drought-stricken farms and onto government-built homesteads with arable land.⁵²⁹ While a large amount of the RA’s annual budget went to direct agricultural programs such as emergency loans and grants to destitute farm families, farmer debt reduction, the redevelopment of substandard farm land, and the construction of rural homesteads and communities, a key component of the agency was the greenbelt program: the designing of “an ideal suburban community carried out as a complete whole on virgin land guarded against blight.”⁵³⁰ Greenbelt, Maryland was first established community of the federal suburban settlement program, promoted as a completely new town that could offer low income families a well-built, modern home, healthful surroundings and access to garden, park, playground, and recreational forest space. Though the *Baltimore Evening Sun* called a “solid American agrarian class”—a built environment for a re-instilled Jeffersonian, rural-based civilization—in fact the greenbelt program focused on the resettlement of low income industrial worker families to preconceived suburban communities protected by an encircled “green belt” of undeveloped land.⁵³¹ The official stated purpose of the federal greenbelt program was to:

to obtain a large tract of land, and on it 'to create a community protected by an encircling green belt; the community to be designed

⁵²⁹ For an established, general history of the Resettlement Administration, see Bernard Sternsher, *Rexford Tugwell and the New Deal* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964).

⁵³⁰ Resettlement Administration, *What the Resettlement Administration has Done* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), 3-4.

⁵³¹ “Young Man in a Hurry,” *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 19 November 1936, Folder 2 – “Tugwell Papers, Clippings: Resignation 1936,” Box 113 – Clippings: 1935-1936, 1942, 1955, Rexford G. Tugwell Papers, FDRPL.

for families of predominantly modest income, and arranged and administered so as to encourage that kind of family and community life which will be better than they now enjoy.⁵³²

Historians have long explored the importance of the federal greenbelt town program as a significant project during FDR's New Deal era of reform. Indeed, as historian Joseph Arnold explains, the construction of Greenbelt, Maryland was one of the largest single projects built by the administration by sheer number of workers hired for the construction: more than thirteen thousand previously unemployed men.⁵³³ The program, however, had a complicated relationship to the international garden city movement. By the election of FDR to the presidency in 1932, the Regional Planning Association of America, the predominant organizational chapter of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation, had ultimately dissolved, with its members left to pursue their individual projects. While RPAA members such as Clarence Stein and Catherine Bauer would go on to consult and work for New Deal agencies and projects such as the greenbelt program, they did not hold positions of great influence in terms of directing the outcomes of the projects.⁵³⁴ By 1938, Raymond Unwin of Letchworth Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb fame toured Greenbelt, Maryland, guided by Resettlement Administration official John Lansill. Unwin was clearly an influential figure in the spatial reformist

⁵³² John Dreier, "Greenbelt Planning: Resettlement Administration Builds Three Model Towns," *Pencil Points*, August 1936, Folder 7 – "Henry Morgenthau Jr / Correspondence / Grapes – Greenbelt Housing Project [1937-38] / [Greenbelt Housing Project]," Box 112, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers, FDRPL.

⁵³³ Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 305. Also, Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 140; David P. Fogle, "The Development of Greenbelt," in *Greenbelt: History of a New Town, 1937-1987*, ed. Mary Lou Williamson (Norfolk: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1987), 24; Michael V. Namorato, *Rexford G. Tugwell: A Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 114; Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement*, 72; Arnold, *New Deal in the Suburbs*, 112.

⁵³⁴ Buder, *Visionaries & Planners*, 175-176;

vision of the program, but he did not play a direct role in the greenbelt planning. With its decidedly modernist architecture, the greenbelt communities aesthetically seemed to what Mervyn Miller calls a “modernist updating of the garden city image,” and one shaped by the emergent cultural ideas on architecture by the prominent modern planners and architects Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright.⁵³⁵

The Resettlement Administration paid homage to Ebenezer Howard and the garden city movement when they promoted and publicized their greenbelt communities. In a 1936 speech in Cincinnati, Ohio, RA administrator Rexford Guy Tugwell explained that the federal government planned to create “rural-industrial” communities (“greenbelts”) where low income industrial workers and their families could be repopulated into modern, suburban homes. The underlying idea behind these greenbelt communities, Tugwell explained, was “first expressed by Ebenezer Howard,” an English stenographer whose personal witnessing of the aftermath of the 1871 Chicago fire inspired his idea that a preconceived town could be newly and wholly built. Tugwell grounded the government’s planned greenbelts in Howard’s ideas—“an ideal union of town and country life, in which the use of every foot of land was planned to eliminate waste and provide the inhabitants with the maximum of healthy and pleasant surroundings.”⁵³⁶ At the same time, Tugwell proclaimed the greenbelt communities to be distinct products of a particular context of a national

⁵³⁵ Mervyn Miller, “Garden Cities and Suburbs: At Home and Abroad,” *Journal of Planning History* 1 (2002): 22-4; Mardges Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 166; 19 May 1935 diary entry by Rexford G. Tugwell, Folder 1 – Diary Notes – 1935, Box 32, Rexford G. Tugwell Papers, FDRPL.

⁵³⁶ “Cincinnati Speech 2/5/36”, Folder 5, Box 57 – Speeches and Writings Files: 1935-1937, Rexford G. Tugwell Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library (hereafter referred to as FDRPL), Hyde Park, New York.

economic depression: a reform for dealing with “[o]ur own situation.” While RA promoters and supporters acknowledged the program’s debt to the ideals of Howard and garden cities, they proclaimed Greenbelt as a new type of suburban community “designed for families of moderate income, and arranged and administered (managed) so as to encourage that kind of family and community life which will be better than they now enjoy...”⁵³⁷ The distinction of the greenbelt model from its garden city antecedent, however, can be illuminated by unpacking the physical cultural dimensions of greenbelt and their relation to the program’s intentions as a government intervention for provide unemployment relief and farmer resettlement.

Tugwell’s assertion that the greenbelt community model’s was unique in relation to its garden city predecessor was contextually significant. For some time historians have located the ideological underpinnings of Greenbelt’s design within the garden city movement. Robert Fishman wrote in his 1977 book on twentieth-century urban utopias that “the ‘Greenbelt Cities’ undertaken by the Resettlement Administration in the 1930s owed their form to the example of the Garden City. New Deal historian William Leuchtenburg remarked that the greenbelt communities “reflected the ideas of the English garden-city advocate Ebenezer Howard,” while greenbelt historians Arnold Alanen and Joseph Eden’s account of the program’s Greendale, Wisconsin community asserted that Howard’s ideas for the “English garden city was perhaps foremost in the minds of Americans when they turned to

⁵³⁷ “Greenbelt Towns,” *The Architectural Record*, September 1936, Folder 7 – “Henry Morgenthau Jr / Correspondence / Grapes – Greenbelt Housing Project [1937-38] / [Greenbelt Housing Project],” Box 112: Greenbelt Housing Project, 1937-1938, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers, FDRPL.

suburban planning.”⁵³⁸ Robert Freestone is undoubtedly accurate in his contention that the greenbelt communities functioned as the reformist link connecting the garden city movement with the “New Towns” movement of postwar Britain and America.⁵³⁹ When studied as strictly a blueprint for urban/suburban/spatial reform, there appears a great deal of historical material and context through which one could make an interesting and insightful comparison between English and American garden cities and greenbelt communities.

Studying garden cities in terms of each community plan’s biopolitical intentions and physical cultural dimensions, however, results in a more complicated historical relation between garden cities and greenbelts. To begin with, the greenbelt town program was promoted by the Resettlement Administration as a project to put unemployed industrial laborers in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore workers back to work. A 1937 Department of Agriculture press release announced that the program’s “primary purpose” was “to provide employment—as much employment as possible and as quickly as possible—for thousands of men in the District of Columbia, adjacent Maryland counties and the City of Baltimore.” While the department advertised the modern amenities of the affordable greenbelt homes—with modern kitchen appliances, heating, and electrical units—they acknowledged that “Greenbelt has been primarily a relief project,” causing the Resettlement

⁵³⁸ Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, 23; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 140; Arnold R. Alanen and Joseph A. Eden, *Main Street Ready-Made: The New Deal Community of Greendale, Wisconsin* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1987), 1-2.

⁵³⁹ Robert Freestone, “Greenbelts in City and Regional Planning,” in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, eds. Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 77; Robert Fishman, “The American Garden City: Still Relevant?,” in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Stephen V. Ward (New York: E & FN Spon, 1992), 149-150.

Administration to spend more on labor due to its worker relief and rehabilitation goals than they would have needed to “had the economical building of low-cost houses been the sole object of the project.” Thus, during Greenbelt’s construction the program strove to use “maximum amount of employment to relief labor,” choosing hand methods of construction over machine methods when possible.⁵⁴⁰ Racial politics were embedded within these relief programs just as they were in the racial nationalist undercurrent of English garden city ideology. As George Lipsitz explains, New Deal social and economic programs recreated cultural understandings of whiteness through the systematic exclusion of minorities as relief beneficiaries. New Deal policies reproduced the benefits of white identity by racializing who was and was not to benefit from the FDR Administration’s relief programs.⁵⁴¹ As well, there remains a need to study the laboring activities of greenbelt program construction workers, particularly as they came to define their conceptions of national masculine identity through their laboring interaction with the landscape.⁵⁴² Yet, though Ebenezer Howard spoke of the task of building English garden cities as “a great field of work for the adult population,” the embodiment of the planners’ conceptions of healthy living depended on the prescription of physical cultural activities for residents living

⁵⁴⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, “Information for the Press,” Folder 7 – “Henry Morgenthau Jr / Correspondence / Grapes – Greenbelt Housing Project [1937-38] / [Greenbelt Housing Project],” Box 112, Henry Morgenthau Jr. Papers, FDPL; Final Report of Project Costs Including Analysis of Actual Construction Costs, 30 August 1939, Farm Security Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Greenbelt Planning Records, RG 96 - Records of the Farmers Home Administration, National Archives II (hereafter referred to as NAI), College Park, Maryland.

⁵⁴¹ George Lipsitz, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the “White” Problem in American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 47, no. 3(1995): 370-372.

⁵⁴² Historian Neil Maher similarly examined how the young white men of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCA) came to understand conceptions of American nationalism through their laboring activities with natural landscape. See Maher, *Nature’s New Deal*.

in the newly constructed community.⁵⁴³ The intentions of the federal greenbelt town programs was shaped in large part by a political and economic context of unemployment and government-initiated emergency relief, causing the program's biopolitical to deviate from the garden city movement's primary intention as an emergent built environment form confined to the dominant social relations of the capitalist mode.

Second, the greenbelt town program sought to house low income industrial worker families through communities adjacent to cities and places of work, complicating the physical cultural and biopolitical underpinnings of their stated objective in constructing a "complete town" on suburban land. The rural land use efforts of the garden city movement, spurred on by the industrial decentralization projects of companies such as Cadbury and Lever Brothers, resulted in promoting the communities as places where industry and rural life could be combined in a singular town, inspiring pastoral pursuits and laboring opportunities, organized sporting and physical cultural spaces in the town, and healthier, contented, more productive worker bodies. This paternalist impulse to regulate and maintain working class bodies through "planned industry amid idyllic surroundings" was articulated in advertisements for Letchworth Garden City. Letchworth would "lead to new [N]ational standards of useful, profitable, contented living" because the "manufacturing and the residential elements are not allowed to clash." The goal was to surround workers in "charming natural surroundings" and have them work in

⁵⁴³ "Typescript of lecture entitled 'Remedies for Unemployment'," HALS.

“pleasing,” “modern” local factories.⁵⁴⁴ Similarly, in the context of the RPAA’s regionalist ambitions and eugenic fears of the inefficiency of urban worker productivity and commuter traffic congestion, City Housing Corporation promoted their American garden and regional cities as “healthful places to live in, efficient places to work in,” harkening the movement’s complete residential and industrial decentralization objectives.⁵⁴⁵

The Resettlement Administration, by comparison, emphasized that their federal greenbelt town program was, first, an effort towards the “creation of employment”—it was funded through the allocation of federal support from the Emergency Relief Act of 1933— but second a project that considered “all the physical elements that contribute to a satisfactory family and community life.” The towns would have a definite “conception of purpose,” but it was acknowledged that greenbelt inhabitants would “depend on nearby industry for support.”⁵⁴⁶ In terms of its impact on the program’s biopolitical intentions, it molded the purpose of greenbelt planning as an attempt to make “a better and more pleasant way of living” for low income families, without a complementary goal of decentralizing industrial work to suburban districts.⁵⁴⁷ The healthy bodies of the greenbelt program were to be

⁵⁴⁴ “Planned Industry amid Idyllic Surroundings,” Letchworth Garden City Advertisement, The Overseas Daily Mail, 11 December 1943, Resident Reminiscences of Letchworth Garden City in Newspaper Articles, LBM4346, GCCSC.

⁵⁴⁵ “For Release in Morning Papers November 16th, 1927,” CURMC.

⁵⁴⁶ Will W. Alexander, *Report of the Administrator of the Resettlement Administration, 1937*, 1 October 1937, United States Department of Agriculture, Folder - Projects Transferred to FPHA From FSA, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Public Housing Administration, RG 196, NAI; Henry S. Churchill, “America’s Town Planning Begins,” *The New Republic*, 12 June 1936, Folder - Projects Transferred to FPHA From FSA, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Public Housing Administration, RG 196, NAI.

⁵⁴⁷ The effect of this direct focus on the communities as housing and living communities near established work places can be exemplified in newspaper accounts of early Greenbelt residents

leisurely bodies, as the communities were prescribed with sporting spaces that reproduced dominant middle-class physical cultural forms within 1930s American capitalist society.

As a result, the sporting and physical cultural practices instituted by the federal greenbelt town program were culturally dominant active body practices long associated with the construction of modern, white masculine identities. Greenbelt, Maryland was a racially-segregated community, restricted to white families of “modest means.”⁵⁴⁸ Their promoted recreational and leisurely opportunities reflected this racial politics, as the federal government constructed a swimming pool, tennis courts, and an athletic field, along with the prescribed opportunities for outdoor “recreation” provided by the surrounding green belt.⁵⁴⁹ Swimming pools, in particular, were sporting spaces that, in the early twentieth century, were defined by middle class notions of leisure and racial exclusivity.⁵⁵⁰ An early editorial in Greenbelt’s co-operative newsletter proclaimed that “[a]ctive participation in basketball, table tennis, dancing, hiking, softball, hunting, fishing and ice-skating...will be encouraged here,” an indication that early residents were attracted by the opportunities for sporting pastimes long associated with fashioning of modern white middle class identities.⁵⁵¹ In addition, the government’s close association of the

commuting to work. See “‘Patented’ Route to Washington,” *Cooperator (Greenbelt)*, 24 November 1937, 11.

⁵⁴⁸ “Resettlement Administration Study, Vol. 1, Summarized Report With Supporting Data, December 1, 1936,” Folder 1 - Resettlement Administration, 1935-1937, Box 238, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers, FDRPL.

⁵⁴⁹ “Final Report of Project Costs Including Analysis of Actual Construction Costs,” NAII.

⁵⁵⁰ Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 1-7.

⁵⁵¹ Editorial, *The Cooperator (Greenbelt)*, 24 November 1937, 7. For discussions of the cultural and racial politics of modern American sports as “national pastimes,” see Mark Dyreson, “American

“green belt” with opportunities for recreation practices reflected the program’s alignment with dominant American cultural ideas on “wilderness” or “undeveloped land” as spaces for the inculcation of white middle-class American masculine values.⁵⁵² The Department of Agriculture promoted Greenbelt, Maryland’s ample recreational opportunities, specifically those that would be afforded by the encircle belt of undeveloped forest and park space. They cited the availability of swimming and boating at the community’s artificially created lake, a recreational center in the center of the town with large athletic fields, picnic facilities, and playgrounds, and trail and camp sites through the surrounding forests for Boy and Girl Scout troops, “outdoor sports,” and trail hiking.⁵⁵³ These were popular, dominant and emergent sporting and physical cultural practices linking the communities with the cultural values of the contextual capitalist mode. Despite an implicit intention to inspire civic cooperation amongst the residents, the prescribed sporting and physical cultural practices socially and spatially reproduced capitalist relations.⁵⁵⁴

Lewis Mumford, however, looked at the creation of the greenbelt communities through a nostalgic biopolitical lens similarly to the intentions imbued in the garden and regional cities of Sunnyside and Radburn, respectively. A Resettlement Administration report stated that their greenbelt communities were modeled after to fit the “familiar American pattern” exemplified in small New

National Pastimes: The Genealogy of an Idea,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 1-2 (2014): 6-28.

⁵⁵² See Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*; Philip J. Delora, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁵⁵³ United States Department of Agriculture, “Information for the Press,” FDPL.

⁵⁵⁴ Rexford G. Tugwell, “Cooperation and Resettlement,” *Current History*, 1937, Folder 21 – Cooperation and Resettlement, Box 57, Rexford G. Tugwell Papers, FDRPL.

England and Midwestern communities, where there is “common” park space in the center.⁵⁵⁵ In 1939, the American Institute of Planners helped to produce a film, scripted by Mumford’s himself, titled *The City*. The film sharply contrasted a nostalgic look at “early American life in a charming New England village” with the deleterious effects of urban industrial development, as a way of underscoring the need to reform the living environments of modern America. The point was to highlight the deplorable conditions brought to the lives of urban dwellers by industrial capitalism, and argue that healthier, modern built environments were possible through town planning. The film then used Greenbelt, Maryland as the exemplar of a future-directed, healthier, intelligently planned city. Physical culture figured prominently in the scenes depicting greenbelt, with children playing outside and adults leisurely enjoying the ample green space, sunlight, and fresh air, and the plentiful forest, park, and “natural” spaces surrounding the modern housing and planned community. Though the film did not discuss the importance of Greenbelt in association with other regional planning projects such as the Appalachian Trail, it did showcase the community as a model in corrective town planning for the purposes of cultivating and maintaining a healthier, contented national population.⁵⁵⁶ However, the federal greenbelt town program emerged in a context of authoritarian state planning, with New Deal government administrators seeking the rational ordering of nature and society for the purposes of creating a more efficient workforces and relation with

⁵⁵⁵ R.G. Tugwell, *Interim Report of the Resettlement Administration* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936), Folder - Projects Transferred to FPHA From FSA, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Public Housing Administration, RG 196, NAIL.

⁵⁵⁶ *The City*, directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke (New York: American Documentary Films, Inc., 1939), film; The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, *The City* pamphlet, July 1941, Folder 26 – Accounts of The City Documentary, Box 7, Series 4, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

natural landscapes.⁵⁵⁷ The planning of Greenbelt, Maryland, like the other garden cities examined in this dissertation, was planned as a preconceived community form and touted by its administrators and supporters as, much like Ebenezer Howard's garden cities, forming "the basis of a healthy, safe and pleasant living."⁵⁵⁸ It was also the result of action by an authoritarian government institution seeking the emergency relief of unemployed white workers through the construction of modernized, pre-planned suburban communities. There is an important, illuminative comparative study to be done between the greenbelt town program and the communities built as a result of international garden city movement, but the emergence of greenbelts signaled an emergent era in the incorporation of garden city principles towards the centralized planning of communities.

Conclusion

At least a year after the construction of Sunnyside Gardens began, Clarence Stein wrote a letter to Lewis Mumford while traveling on the California Limited train route. His words foretold the close relation between Stein and CHC with Mumford, Benton MacKaye, and their goals of eventual regional planning, and expressed a hopeful optimism about what they would soon accomplish in their goals for American

⁵⁵⁷ Scott, *Seeing like a State*, 11-52; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deal: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939* (New York: Picador, 2006).

⁵⁵⁸ John Dreier, "Greenbelt Planning: Resettlement Administration Builds Three Model Towns," Pencil Points, August 1936, Folder 7 – "Henry Morgenthau Jr / Correspondence / Grapes – Greenbelt Housing Project [1937-38] / [Greenbelt Housing Project]," Box 112: Greenbelt Housing Project, 1937-1938, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers, FDRPL.

urban and regional planning. Telling Mumford of the works that remains to be done in redeveloping the American landscape, Stein wrote,

I was going to tell you of architectural impressions along the way – but I am afraid this will be endless. Just this reassuring news I must send you. All that I see from the car windows looks temporary – millions of wooden boxes, the temporary abode of pioneers. Don't give up hope – It is all to be re-made. The waste is terrible. But we seem to have pulled through the war, and we will pull through this – at least America. And then you regional planners will have a grand time.⁵⁵⁹

What the letter suggests to me is that, even as Stein and Henry Wright embarked on planning communities with influence of garden city movement principles in mind, they also planned within an understood, broader objective of the need to plan entire regions of the United States for the social, physical, and environmental benefit of the entire nation. In order to understand the biopolitical nostalgia that was articulated through City Housing Corporation's planning and construction of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, we must see their emergence in relation to the RPAA's residual nostalgia for the recreational wilderness spaces they hoped would be preserved through the Appalachian Trail specifically and their regionalist goals overall.

Yet, both communities were linked to and absorbed within the orbit of 1920s urban consumer capitalism, and functioned as modern biopolitical planned environments where the spaces and physical cultural practices of white, middle-class national identities could be maintained and regulated within a completely administered, pre-arranged town. The residual, nostalgic wilderness spaces for recreation signified by the RPAA's Appalachian Trail project was isolated from the

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Clarence S. Stein to Lewis Mumford, 13 September 1925, Folder 9 - C. S.S. to Lewis Mumford Sept. 13, 1925, Box 30, Series 6, Clarence Stein Papers, CURMC.

modern, emergent sporting and physical activity spaces installed at Sunnyside and Radburn, and the inability for CHC to encircle both communities with preserved countryside left landscaped park space and its concomitant fields, courts, and facilities as the primary means of inculcating healthy living habits. At a time when progressive historians like Frederic Paxson framing organized sports as a “new frontier” of social institutions where notions of American exceptionalism and character could be re-forged in the modern urban environment, the planners of Sunnyside and Radburn made sure that residents had access to safe, convenient spaces for sport and physical culture, a luxury in congested, overcrowded like New York City.⁵⁶⁰ Both planned communities by City Housing Corporation reproduced the dominant bourgeois cultural forms that typified the era’s middle and upper class suburban communities, but the planners’ intentions were calculated and pre-conceived, as they sought the creation of self-sustaining complete towns with the ideal social and physical cultural environment for lower middle class Americans. Their goal was to instill a healthier built environment that aligned with their visions of entire regions planned according to humanistic principles rather than the logic of capital accumulation. While their community plans materialized as suburban environments that bore strikingly resemblance to other bourgeois suburban subdivisions in their allocation of organized sport and physical activity, this was part of an overall biopolitical strategy on the part of the CHC to cultivate healthier residents through the tools of modern town planning.

⁵⁶⁰ Frederic L. Paxson, “The Rise of Sport,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 2 (1917): 143-168; Mark Dyreson, “Sport History and the History of Sport in North America,” *The Journal of Sport History* 3 (2007): 405-406.

Conclusion: Of “Machines” and “Gardens”

In September of 2014, the international politics magazine *Foreign Policy* published an in-depth piece by journalist Amanda Kolson Hurley titled “The Machine is a Garden,” a report on the recent international revival of Sir Ebenezer Howard’s original elucidation of a Garden City as a model for twenty-first-century sustainable urban development. The report appeared some months after British Prime Minister David Cameron announced his Tory Government would build at least three new Garden Cities to address the nation’s housing shortages. While the national newspaper *The Guardian* documented on the class politics of the government’s proposed Garden Cities and the apparent lack of affordable housing in the plans—The Town and Country Planning Association, previously the Garden City Association, “told the government it must guarantee affordable homes in four new towns if they are to be considered garden cities”—in the *Foreign Policy* article the discussion centered on the contemporary relevance of Howard’s original community model with addressing the emerging effects of climate change and the need to design more

ecologically friendly cities.⁵⁶¹ “Some people,” Hurley’s tagline proclaimed, “think [garden cities] just might help save the planet.” Hurley’s title was a play on lauded American Studies scholar Leo Marx’s acclaimed 1964 book *The Machine in the Garden*, which studied the cultural significance of pastoral metaphors and tropes of the disruption of American pastoral life by industrialization, transportation and technological innovation within American history and historical literature.⁵⁶²

Reinvigorating the ideological binary commonly found in garden city movement discourse, distinguishing “healthy” country living with “unhealthy” urban life, Hurley wrote that Howard’s model offered “everything big cities didn’t”: a restriction on the number of residents per square acre, “well-built homes for people of diverse means,” “clean air and ample green space,” and a local, accessible place for “employment, education, and culture...” This seemingly eco-friendly approach to community building that was once “in the limelight,” Hurley reported, is now enjoying a revival, with scholars such as the Dean of Yale University School of Architecture Robert A.M. Stern seeing it as a “developmental model for the present and foreseeable future.” The article presented the Garden City as strictly an agent of urban and spatial reform, and an idealistic, yet potential remedy for the contemporary crisis of climate change, urban pollution, and rapidly increasing population in

⁵⁶¹ “Nick Clegg to promise up to three new garden cities with 15,000 homes each,” *The Guardian*, 14 April 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/apr/14/nick-clegg-garden-cities-homes>; Rowena Mason, “New garden cities not required to include low-cost homes, minister says,” *The Guardian*, 21 April 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/apr/21/new-garden-cities-low-cost-homes>; Robert Booth, “New garden cities must offer genuinely affordable homes, says charity,” *The Guardian*, 22 April 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/apr/22/garden-cities-affordable-homes-tcpa-ebbsfleet-howard-letchworth>.

⁵⁶² See Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*; Amanda Kolson Hurley, “The Machine is a Garden,” 26 September 2014, accessed 27 July 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/26/the-machine-is-a-garden/>.

countries such as India and China. While “there is little data to prove definitively that garden cities are in fact the right solution for urban ills,” Hurley highlighted that contemporary advocates such as Stern continue to see it as a potentially more “humane, sustainable, equitable” plan for future communities. The article concludes with a quote from a Chicago architect that would have harmonized with Lewis Mumford’s and Sir Patrick Geddes’ geotechnic visions: “[T]he machine itself...has to become a garden.”⁵⁶³

When such contemporary supporters of Howard’s original Garden City ideals speak of the community model as a coherent urban reform strategy specifically focused on objective problems of overpopulation, environmental degradation and sustainable development, they neglect attention to the international garden city movement’s deeply rooted biopolitical intentions and implications. The overall objective of my dissertation was to study the problematic links between international garden city movement plans and their communities with the embodied and cultural environment politics of their historical contexts—the permeation of eugenics doctrine, racial imperialist discourse and policies, class conflict, and troublesome attachments to visions of traditional, pastoral or more “natural” environments as necessary spaces for inculcating healthy living habits—in order to inform contemporary discussions of the Garden City as a community form imbued with the workings of modern biopower. In other words, through the international garden city movement, middle and upper class Anglo-American reformers and planners sought the regenerating of lower class bodies by creating a built environment that could

⁵⁶³ Hurley, “The Machine is a Garden”; Stern, Fishman and Tilove, *Paradise Planned*.

reproduce the nostalgic definitions of health and nature within the imperialist, racial nationalist, gendered, eugenics-laden, bourgeois, modern Anglo-American imaginary. Scholars, urban planners and architects continue to discuss the need for more “biophilic” cities and ecologically-balanced designs in our present era of climate change, and communities where residents can enjoy “daily contact with nature to be healthy, productive individuals.”⁵⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the historical origins and (bio)politics of integrating landscaped nature in relation to urban and built spaces are left to the writings and monographs of historians and cultural theorists in a different discipline and field of inquiry.

The arrival of anthropocentric climate change means scholars can no longer afford to discuss the reforming of people’s built environment and the promotion of ideal, sustainable community models in isolation from the embedded biopolitics of their plans, designs and layouts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently estimated that global society has roughly two decades to institute sustainable, ecologically-balanced sociocultural, political, economic, urban and environmental practices before the world enters a period of irreversible environmental degradation.⁵⁶⁵ This year, over 16,000 scientists published a “warning” that “human beings and the natural world are on a collision course” and a path to human and environmental catastrophe if drastic measures are not implemented to reverse

⁵⁶⁴ Timothy Beatley, *Biophilic Cities: Integrating Nature into Urban Design and Planning* (Washington: Island Press, 2011), 3-7; Stephen R. Kellert, E.O. Wilson, eds., *The Biophilia Hypothesis* (Washington: Island Press, 1993).

⁵⁶⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fifth assessment report (AR5) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Geneva: IPCC, 2013); Karen Bell, “‘Living Well’ as a Path to Social, Ecological and Economic Sustainability,” *Urban Planning* 4 (2017): 19.

destructive human behaviors.⁵⁶⁶ The planners and reformers of the garden city movement advanced a valid point when they prioritized housing reform as a key component of installing more humane, equitable, and sustainable living arrangements. However, if planners and architects such as Robert A.M. Stern want to advance the garden city as a “developmental model” sustainable, human, equitable twenty-first century planning, we must first come to terms with its problematic biopolitical history, for it is in the treatment of bodies and health that the garden city’s ultimate sustainability can be studied. This gap in understanding between critical historical and biopolitical analysis and contemporary policy must be bridged.

Because of my incorporation of cultural materialist and ecological Marxist theoretical frameworks, in tandem with social theories of modern biopower and biopolitics, I have decidedly advanced a dissertation based firmly in the socialist tradition of cultural and post-Marxism.⁵⁶⁷ The socialist politics of such historical analysis, reformulated in the contemporary context of climate change and capital’s impact on the global environment, demand that I, following Laclau and Mouffe, start with the “transformations of the world in which we live,” and from there “interrogate the past” and “search within it for the genealogy of the present situation.” The point is to politicize the historical analysis, to “establish with that past a dialogue” with the present “which is organized around continuities and discontinuities, identifications

⁵⁶⁶ Jen Christensen, “16,000 scientists sign dire warning to humanity over health of planet,” CNN, 15 November 2017, retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/14/health/scientists-warn-humanity/index.html>.

⁵⁶⁷ For more explorations into the amorphous spheres of “cultural Marxism” and “post-Marxism,” see Anderson, *Arguments Within Western Marxism*; Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain*; Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Amiya Kumar Bagchi and Amita Chatterjee, eds., *Marxism With and Beyond Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

and ruptures.”⁵⁶⁸ If urban planners, architects, and policymakers are to truly transcend the problematic aspects of garden city and other idealized planned community plans and use the power of urban and community planning to address the dialectic between livelihood and ecology, first we must bring “the art” of designing cities in conversation with not only historical politics and specificities of each planned community’s underlying ideals, but a focused understanding on the reform of the built environment as an ideational phenomenon with material consequences and dependent upon politicized imaginings of the healthy body. This is what I tried to do.

The catastrophic, advancing crisis of climate change and contemporary global society’s entrance into the epoch of the “Anthropocene”—a period of earth history characterized by the human species’ reliance on fossil fuels and deleterious impact on the global ecosystem—demands that scholars rethink the ways in which we conceptualize urban and environmental reforms such as garden cities.⁵⁶⁹ By planning communities with such underlying, politicized intentions embedded within their layouts, garden cities were, in their very foundation, the spatial and architectural materialization of particular forms of biopolitics that allowed their reformist intentions to be absorbed within the cultural hegemony of unsustainable capitalist logic. Stern and contemporary supporters of building new garden city communities would do well to remember that, more than simply a model for better urban and regional planning, garden cities were historical constructions formed of contextually-

⁵⁶⁸ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, “Post-Marxism without Apologies,” *New Left Review* 1/166 (1987): 80.

⁵⁶⁹ Ian Angus, *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System* (New York: Monthly Review, 2016); Jeremy Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

specific notions of health, nature, and the relation between cities and countryside imagined *within*, rather than in against the relations of production. More than this, each planned garden city studied in this dissertation was shaped by the planners' problematic social and ideological imagining of the ideal body, allowing their plans to serve as blueprints for the re-articulation of health within a twentieth-century capitalist context defined by bourgeois concerns of the urbanization and industrialization's impact upon traditional notions of health and nature. What I am trying to say is that the Garden City of Howard's *To-morrow* and the subsequent international movement was never a "machine," nor was it a "garden." It was, in its rawest historical form, a spatial blueprint for installing the planners' residual and emergent ideas of health and nature within a preconceived built environment, and a spatial vehicle for articulating bourgeois biopolitical hopes for the regeneration of working class and low income bodies without usurping dominant Anglo-American cultural and national values of health and nature. Unless we have thoroughly deluded ourselves into believing that the further embourgeoisment of built environments, represented by the Garden City, is a pathway to building sustainable, ecological, and humane communities, we must allow this complicated biopolitical history to let us question the sustainability and vitality of the community model as a solution for reforming the urban environments wrought by industrial capitalism.

If Howard's community model is to have any relevance in the pursuit of more sustainable, equitable and humane built environments, contemporary advocates of twenty-first century garden cities need to fully recognize that Howard's notions of health, nature, the "unhealthfulness" of the industrial city, and the "natural

healthfulness” of the countryside were never objective, neutral, distinct or timeless notions. When Howard wrote of the “natural healthfulness” of the English countryside, it was a constructed, mythical, bourgeois vision of the past strength and pastoral origins of the Anglo-Saxon race, and a belief that the British nation’s imperial strength in the context of twentieth-century international conflict depended upon “returning” the national population, particularly those “degenerating” urban workers, to such traditionally valued agrarian spaces and masculine occupations. As this dissertation tried to explain, the creation of garden city communities was like a paternalist “civilizing mission” aimed at the urban working classes: a deeply politicized enterprise based on conservative middle and upper class reactions to contextual transformations of technology, culture, and traditional built environments, and bolstered by perceptions of the social and biological primitiveness of the urban poor.⁵⁷⁰ So it should be of no surprise that, at arguably its ideologically extreme appropriation, Howard’s model became a central component of the eugenic and racial hygiene objectives of early twentieth century German and Nazi town planners. In early twentieth century German planning, the Garden City was a highly useful built environment form that German planners used to bolster racist national ideologies and link notion of ideal communities to traditional pastoral and eugenic values.⁵⁷¹ I have

⁵⁷⁰ See Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. One can read about the history of “civilizing missions” in context of Western and American expansionism and imperialism. See Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America’s Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Stefan Huebner, *Pan-Asian Sports and the Emergence of Modern Asia, 1913-1974* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017).

⁵⁷¹ See Voigt, “The Garden City as Eugenic Utopia”; Schubert, “Theodor Fritsch and the German (völkische) version of the Garden City”; Gerhard Fehl, “The Nazi Garden City,” in *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Stephen V. Ward (London: E & FN Spon, 1992), 88-106. For a study into the environmental/ecological values of the Nazi regime, see Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Mark Cioc and Thomas Zeller, *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

little doubt that those who now advocate the creation of twenty-first century garden cities believe the community model to be humane, ecologically sustainable, often basing these beliefs on the model's underlying principle of the balancing of city and rural life for the benefit of residents. Raymond Williams however, explained decades ago how people's attitudes and understandings of city and country life have often shifted not only in relation to one another but to each historical context's capitalist mode and relations of production.⁵⁷² The contemporary significance of the Garden City, in the context of climate change, lies in its capacity to illustrate the dangers of wielding urban planning tools in the service of modern biopower, class hegemony, and the racial, imperialist, and paternalist visions of middle and upper class perceptions of livelihood.

From Garden Cities to New Towns

Garden city movement historians such as Carol Christensen argue that Howard's community ideal laid the groundwork for what became the post-World War II "New Towns" movement in Britain and the United States. Following the creation of coherent, complete garden cities at Letchworth and Welwyn, the garden city movement in Britain became, to use Peter Hall's word, "becalmed". Between the years of Welwyn Garden City's establishment in 1923 and the 1946 passage of the New Towns Act, movements originally with the singular rallying cry of creation garden cities broadened in objectives and scope. The Garden Cities and Town

⁵⁷² Williams, *The Country and the City*.

Planning Association, formerly known as the Garden City Association, was changed again to the Town and Country Planning Association, and remains so to this day.

Demands for postwar reconstruction, the building of “homes fit for heroes,” and 1944 Abercrombie plan for the regional planning of the Greater London area and the restriction of the city’s overspill into suburban and countryside districts, led to an Act of Parliament providing Treasury grants directly to public development corporations for the purpose of constructing “new towns” modeled in part after principles promoted during the garden city movement. Between 1946 and 1996, 28 new towns were built across the United Kingdom, housing a population of over 2,200,000 people.⁵⁷³ The emergent cultural formation, modern concept of Howard’s Garden City, imbued in part with residual nostalgia for pre-industrial, bucolic spaces as a critique of capitalism’s deleterious impact on the urban environment, was splintered and suffused within various town, urban, and regional planning initiatives. It was absorbed into the dominant cultural values of a twentieth-century capitalist British national culture and political economy.

In the United States, while the Regional Planning Association of America is often credited with introducing the Garden City as a planning concept, landscape architects and city planners such as John Nolen were well aware of Letchworth and Howard’s ideas before the RPAA’s formation in 1923. In Nolen’s work as planner and architect, the creation of garden city—perhaps best exemplified in his planning of the “ideal [White, upper middle class] town” of Mariemont, Ohio—was just one

⁵⁷³ Hall and Ward, *Sociable Cities*, 47-53; Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement*, 1-3; “Town and Country Planning Association,” accessed 14 October 2017, <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/>.

prominent element of his overall career in city planning, which included the redesigning of existing cities and the incorporation of “civic art,” the creation of industrial towns and model villages, and bourgeois suburban communities.⁵⁷⁴ Historian Bruce Stephenson argues that Nolen’s approach to city planning, his “Garden City ethic,” was an important ideological and ideational capillary connecting the residuals of the American civic planning tradition with the emergent New Urbanism urban and suburban reform movement later in the twentieth century. Interestingly enough, New Urbanist discourse, particularly the writings of movement advocate and social critic James Howard Kunstler, includes an espousal of instilling traditional, American (and residual agrarian) values of “civic republicanism” within their new planned communities, with the intentions of hopefully cultivating citizens who valued and would foster a collective community spirit rather than succumb to the self-interested ethics of consumer capitalism and its concomitant landscapes of privatized strip mall developments and gated subdivisions.⁵⁷⁵ Meanwhile, by the 1960s an estimated 160 American “new towns” were constructed by private developers, promoted as complete “communities” where prospective residents could buy into a pre-packaged, planned “way of life.” By the 1960s, the co-operative civic virtues and community of the federal greenbelt town program became a spatial commodity for American consumers to purchase within the dominant capitalist

⁵⁷⁴ Stephenson, *John Nolen*, 3-4.

⁵⁷⁵ Stephenson, “The Roots of the New Urbanism,” 99-100; James Howard Kunstler, *Home from Nowhere: Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). For sources on the New Urbanism movement, see Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *The Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point, 2000).

economy.⁵⁷⁶ In both Britain and the United States, the decline of a focused garden city movement and the broadening of town and regional planning objectives has resulted in the absorption of garden city values, and the evacuation of their socialist, co-operative ideological underpinnings, within the dominant cultural values and formations of each national political economy. Urban planning scholars Tony Schuman and Elliott Sclar once wrote that “[P]lanning...is the process of superseding market forces in creating the built environment”; to study the biopolitics of past garden cities is to see community planning as a mechanism for instilling dominant, residual, and emergent imaginings of the healthy body without disrupting the forces and relations of capital.⁵⁷⁷

This has complicated even further the tracing and highlighting of the biopolitics of contemporary urban and regional reform projects. In the academia arena of public health, researchers rightfully situate Howard and the garden city movement as an important historical moment in the evolution of urban public health reforms, ideas, and policies. Yet, they discuss the emergence of garden cities within a chronological, progressive narrative along with the traditional notable moments in general public health history, causing Howard’s ideas to be discussed as if the garden city was progression from Edwin Chadwick’s 1842 report on the sanitary conditions of the urban poor of Britain and John Snow’s studies of cholera outbreaks in urban slums. The Garden City model was not simply a reformist outgrowth of Friedrich Engels’ account of working class conditions, and the planning of garden cities was

⁵⁷⁶ Christensen, *The American Garden City and the New Towns Movement*, 105-106.

⁵⁷⁷ Tony Schuman and Elliott Sclar, “The Impact of Ideology on American Town Planning: From the Garden City to Battery Park City,” in *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, eds. Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 433.

more than a reflection of “the characteristics of laboratory science”: garden city plans were biopolitical spatial projects.⁵⁷⁸ It is not enough to simply prescribe more open and green space within cities, or increase the walkability of a community, or construct housing in locations with less pollution and more “fresh air”.⁵⁷⁹ If the goal is the creation of truly ecologically sustainable, socially equitable, and humane built environments that inherently challenge the spatial and social relations of capital accumulation, urban public health scholars and policy makers must first question the historical and contextual origins of their understandings of health and nature, and ask themselves what idealized body is being privileged when they imagine what constitutes, for them, a healthy built environment. The tools and implements of modern biopower, as they are mobilized in the interests of spatial planning, are nourished by the imagined embodied dimensions of urban and environmental health reforms and the historical and social construction of definitions of health and nature. If the history of garden city planning can teach us anything, it is that the construction and prescription of a healthy built environment, in the context of historical and contemporary capitalism, is arguably as much about biopolitical objectives and the

⁵⁷⁸ Marina Kenzer, “Health Cities: A Guide to the Literature,” *Environment and Urbanization* 11, no. 1 (1999): 201-220; Jason Corburn, *Healthy City Planning: From Neighbourhood to National Health Equity* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 39-45, 62-65; Sakar, Webster and Gallacher, *Healthy Cities*; Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). I do not mean to overgeneralize the work and policies of urban public health researchers, as Jason Corburn, for example, has written on the inherent historical politics of garden cities and similar attempts at urban reform. See Jason Corburn, *Toward the Healthy City: People, Places, and the Politics of Urban Planning* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), 44-48.

⁵⁷⁹ Samantha L. Kingsley, Melissa Eliot, Lynn Carlson, Jennifer Finn, David L. MacIntosh, Helen H. Suh and Gregory A. Wellenius, “Proximity of US Schools to Major Roadways: a Nationwide Assessment,” *Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology* 24, no. 3 (2014): 253-259.

embourgeoisement of definitions of nature and health as it is an attempt to reform cities, suburbs, and spaces of living.

The Future of Cultural Materialism: “Livelihood”

The insight of cultural materialist theories allow us to question the seeming dialectical quality of Howard’s Garden City objectives—the merging of “town” and “country” attributes within “Town-Country Magnets” in order to resolve their cultural tension through the creation of an improved built environment—and the assertion that Howard’s model was inherently ecological and progressive in its approach to reforming urban spaces. In a 1936 lecture on housing and town planning at Columbia University, Raymond Unwin explained that the planner must rely of the “chief faculty” of their imagination: “It is the...imaginative quality in the design of a building, or site, or city, which differentiates the outstanding from the mediocre.” In his creative designed of garden cities and suburbs and work on improved housing standards in Britain, Unwin argued, “[W]e...proved...if the slum dwellers are given decent and adequate dwellings the majority of them will soon learn to adapt their lives to the improved conditions.” Thanks to the guidance of cultural materialist and ecological Marxist insight, however, we can see Unwin’s cultural ideas of “improved conditions” and “outstanding” design in terms of their residual, emergent, and oppositional elements and their relation to class ideology. Thus, when Unwin spoke of the “moral degradation” of overcrowded urban housing, or the architect’s responsibility “to envisage life in terms of human needs, desires, habits, feelings...”

we also understand Unwin as a man born within a particular historical contexts, whose values regarding aesthetics, beauty, health, and recreation were often reflective of his upper middle class upbringing and paternalist desire to morally improve the working class through housing and town planning.⁵⁸⁰ The Garden City was Howard's attempt to improve working class living without class tension, but the resultant communities spatially reproduced Anglo, middle class values of nature, rural life, and healthy living. If the Garden City was dialectical, it was a dialectic between bourgeois understandings of cities and country spaces.

The politics of historical garden city thought can also be critiqued through recent ecological Marxist examinations of the "meaning of work in a sustainable society," with John Bellamy Foster revisiting the writings of Edward Bellamy and William Morris and their conceptions of a future, utopian society in order to unpacking contemporary arguments for how to construct a "prosperous no-growth society." These arguments, Foster notes, often follow Bellamy's mechanistic vision of an industrially and socially efficient socialist future, in which there is an expansion of "leisure as not-work" rather than a reconceptualization of the role of labor and traditional capitalist distinctions between work and leisure. In this way, future social arrangements along the lines of Bellamy's vision offer little alternative to capitalist logic, for they merely propose an increase in "leisure" spaces and practices without a complete rethinking of what constitutes "work" in a socialist society.⁵⁸¹ Morris,

⁵⁸⁰ Raymond Unwin, "Housing and Town Planning Lectures at Columbia University. 1936-37, 1938-39," in *The Legacy of Raymond Unwin: A Human Pattern for Planning*, ed. Walter L. Creese (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1967), 166-213.

⁵⁸¹ Bellamy, *Looking Backward*; John Bellamy Foster, "The Meaning of Work in a Sustainable Society," *Monthly Review* 4 (2017): 1-14.

similarly, was concerned how to create opportunities for “useful,” pleasurable work rather than the preponderance of “useless toil” under industrial capitalism, and the possibility of humans being liberated from work that is dehumanizing and alienating. Humans, Morris argued, create their “livelihoods” through their labor and toil with “Nature”: the aim in his mind was to create a society in which such “acts of livelihood” were pleasurable and worthwhile to the active, laborious person.⁵⁸² Foster, however, importantly notes how both Bellamy and Morris’ visions reproduce capitalist hegemonic ideology, for they assume distinctions between work and leisure that would seemingly collapse in the post-capitalist conditions of creative collectivism. By arguing for the expansion of leisure and play, they preserved the “metabolic rift” between humans, society, and nature.⁵⁸³ Garden city plans and designs, similarly, did not offer a reconceptualization of work and leisure, and articulated the decentralization of populations as the expansion of opportunities within bucolic and “natural” spaces. Both in Britain and the United States, the communities reinforced dominant and residual understandings of health and beauty congruent within capitalist society. Garden cities articulated definitions of leisure, recreation, health, nature, and ideal bodies *within* the dominant relations of capitalism, not in opposition.

Raymond Williams recognized the need to rethink the human metabolic relations with society and nature. He understood “nature” as “ordinary,” just like culture. In *The Country and the City*, Williams examined how people understood and

⁵⁸² William Morris, *Useful Work v. Useless Toil* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 1.

⁵⁸³ Foster, “The Meaning of Work in a Sustainable Society,” 2, 11.

constructed meanings of country life in relation to city life as a way to deconstruct the dominant capitalist logic of the division between country and city. Williams found that the contrast in cultural meaning between the country and the city persisted in the literature as it was produced within the social and material processes of capitalism, despite the lived experience of those in rural and urban economies revealing a much more varied history that was itself part of the processes and relations of capitalism. As cultural studies scholar Rod Giblett explains, Williams revealed how the country was not “the last bastion of nature against exploitation by capitalism, nor the final refuge of nature in flight from capitalism, but its happy hunting (and gathering, and farming) ground in agrarian and industrial capitalism.”⁵⁸⁴

Later in life, Williams articulated a conceptual means of theorizing the historical relations of the elements of “nature” and “culture” without reinforcing boundaries or oppositions between the two and thereby reinforcing capitalist hegemonic ideology. As Giblett explains, Williams articulated a concept of “livelihood,” of not only “one’s work and one’s physical surrounds,” but the environmental and non-humans forms, supports, effects, and processes impacting human society. Like his cultural materialist arguments, it was a totalizing concept, a framework for capturing the constituent elements within a “whole way of life,” but a concept that collapsed the boundaries between the cultural, the material, and the environmental. Thus, in Williams’ “livelihood,” what is cultural and productive is also inherently implicated in environmental-spatial processes: “[T]here is no livelihood that is not both cultural and natural” in the concept, Giblett explains.

⁵⁸⁴ Williams, *The Country and the City*; Giblett, “Nature is Ordinary Too,” 930.

“Livelihood is cultural and natural.” The concept, in its incorporation of the social and productive processes within both nature and culture, presumes and requires the analysis to be one of active mediation, dissolving boundaries between binaries and focusing on relations and processes. In order to avoid “a crude contrast between ‘nature’ and ‘production’, and to seek the practical terms of the idea which would supersede both, it allows one to study “a better understood physical world and all truly necessary physical processes,” and transcend culturally-imposed distinctions and divisions, ones like country and city, urban and rural, capital and city, or culture and nature. Livelihood became Williams’ attempt convey historical signification and experience as both cultural and natural, without reproducing hierarchical binaries that reaffirmed the basis for the logic of accumulation and alienation.⁵⁸⁵

Williams’ “livelihood” remains a potentially useful and underdeveloped concept for theorizing and analyzing the historical relations between humans, culture, and environments in opposition to the contrasting binaries of capitalist logic. Future studies of urban and regional reforms, and utopian and co-operative communities would benefit from the concept’s ability to highlight the natural and cultural elements of history and social experience while decolonizing the knowledge from binary oppositions. Moreover, a garden city history of resident’s relations with their surrounding environment, cultural and natural, would benefit from the Williams’ concept, as it would allow them to circumvent the logic of capitalist production, social reproduction, and distinctions between work and leisure that was deeply

⁵⁸⁵ Giblett, “Nature is Ordinary Too,” 928-929; Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (New York: Verso, 1989), 227-237.

embedded within the community designs. In this history of garden city planning, my focus was on the prescribed relations between bodies and environments the planners imagined in their designs. A Marxist theory of “livelihood,” however, potentially offers a lens for seeing how residents interacted with the material and non-human in ways that extend beyond categories such as nature, culture, and human-centered embodiment. It is perhaps in Williams’ concept of “livelihood” that historians and scholars may be able to interrogate how people’s “acts,” labors, leisure and recreation practices, and visions of place and home life entailed relations that opposed and challenged the capitalist division of labor.

The Personal Politics of “Acts” of “Livelihood”

It has been a long, meandering, difficult personal and intellectual journey from my first day as a graduate student at the University of Wyoming in 2010 to the present. Though it may not have emerged in this constructionist, cultural materialist historical narrative on garden city planning, there was a deeply personal as well as political dimension to not only my historical research and analysis, but my initial decision to even study garden city history. This dissertation is a living, unfinished piece of work integral to my lifelong personal and political project in unraveling and (self-)clarifying my personal feelings and bouts of social alienation, their relation to the mode of late capitalism of my late context, and the historical origins of such ordinary human experiences. When I force myself to consider and articulate the root personal reason why I study the history of garden city planning, I realize it is part of

my own attempt, as a subjective human, to figure out how I want to live within a modern world of enduring tragedy and farce.⁵⁸⁶

I was raised in an upper-middle class, white family in the suburban town of North Canton, Ohio, a heavily white, homogenous community on the outskirts of postindustrial, socioeconomically depressed, racially diverse Canton—regularly cited as one of the most dangerous cities of its size in the United States.⁵⁸⁷ North Canton typifies many of the predominantly white suburban communities of “Middle America”: I went to an elementary school where my Serbian-born friend was told to stand during the Pledge of Allegiance, a high school where students congregated and interacted through informal, socially exclusive “cliques,” and where high school sports dominated and dictated teenage social activities regardless of one’s interest in the sporting event. Thinking back, I can see that I was fortunate to be born into a family of open-minded, inclusive, and sometimes eccentric parents—I was taken to probably at least a dozen Moody Blues concerts throughout my childhood—and two older brothers who, in their youth, actively rebelled against the dominant cultural practices of North Canton by playing in local punk rock bands and voluntarily reading philosophical texts as eclectic, difficult and contradictory as Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Albert Camus’s *The Plague*, Ayn Rand’s *Atlas*

⁵⁸⁶ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1981), 15; Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (New York: Verso, 2009), 1-2.

⁵⁸⁷ “Which NE Ohio city came in at #2 on the nation's 10 most dangerous small cities?” Cleveland 19 News, 2014, accessed 10 November 2017, retrieved from <http://www.cleveland19.com/story/25092445/ne-ohio-city-makes-2-on-the-10-most-dangerous-small-cities-in-the-nation>.

Shrugged, and Naomi Klein's *No Logo*.⁵⁸⁸ Both of my parents were born into low income, borderline poor families, with immigrant grandparents who were Pennsylvania and West Virginia coal mines, with relatives who spent their waking lives working for corporations such as the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio, and with parents who personally experienced the hardship and tragedy of the Second World War. As a result, I grew up within the cultural milieu of what Lizabeth Cohen would call a suburban "landscape of mass consumption," personally feeling the alienation of a built environment in which my social activities revolved around participation in sports, loitering in the local shopping mall or its adjacent parking, driving around listening to music, and a later foray into recreational drugs and alcohol.⁵⁸⁹ I came to question myself while growing up in an immediate family of parents and brothers who helped me question the contradictions and problems of the homogenous suburban American experience, and see the absurdity and rampant conservative, biopolitical thought that permeated suburban sports. My brothers and I played sports from our early years into high school—mainly soccer and basketball—and we witnessed firsthand the spatial production of white, heteronormativity through our participation in North Canton's organized sports and our experiences with our predominantly white peers.⁵⁹⁰ It undoubtedly led to my early and ongoing struggles

⁵⁸⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (London: Methuen, 1969); Albert Camus, *The Plague* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972); Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Dutton, 1992); Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (New York: Picador, 2002).

⁵⁸⁹ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

⁵⁹⁰ Caroline Fusco, "Cultural Landscapes of Purification: Sports Spaces and Discourses of Whiteness," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 3 (22): 282-309; Jaime R. Deluca, "Like a 'Fish in Water': Swim Club Membership and the Construction of the Upper-Middle-Class Family Habitus," *Leisure Studies* 3 (35): 259-277.

with depression and social anxiety, and daily battle with feelings of social alienation. I developed early on a desire to find a way of living and a perspective on life that would allow me to see the operations of power that surround and implicate myself, and perhaps find a way to transcend them in a new, more humane form of living and social co-operation.

I do not describe my upbringing to be unnecessarily self-indulgent, but to articulate the development of my sensibility towards understanding the importance of historical inquiry. It was through this experience and my desire to better understand my own subjective position within the whiteness, overt heteronormativity, and upper-middle class sensibility of my social and built upbringing that led me to interrogate historical discourse. I have no source to substantiate the following claim, but I came to believe in the study of the past as the only path that could help me figure out how to live without feelings of inadequacy, sadness, and alienation, and without dread of not only the ongoing catastrophe of unchecked capital accumulation and environmental degradation, but the conscious and unconscious human complicity or at least relation to those processes. If modern power derives its strength by controlling how people understand their relation to the past, surely it was in history that I might figure out a way of unraveling those power relations, if only for my own self-clarification and comprehension, and perhaps as a way of helping me wake up each morning without a sense of dread of the uncertain and inevitable.

So perhaps I was drawn to studying the history of English garden cities because they seemed to exemplify a kind of tension with which I personally struggle: the tension between an uneasiness and dismay with the logic of capital and its

permeation throughout ordinary social life, and the personal politics involved in how one imagines their sense of ideal livelihood: a nostalgia firmly intertwined within the social and spatial relations of capitalism and modern biopower. In the course of writing the dissertation, I felt a simultaneous disdain for the planners' ideas due to their overarching biopolitical intentions and objectives and an admiration for their basic desire to give the working class a home and a community better than that afforded by industrial capitalism. It only takes a quick reading of Sir Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker's 1901 *The Art of Building a Home* to encounter the author's deeply sensual, emotive nostalgia for home life. As I continue to reflect on the historical significance of these passages, I increasingly realize that in focusing on Unwin and Parker's descriptions as cognitive articulations of a form of biopolitics, I unintentionally disregard the deeply personal, affective nature of their longings for a home life that was safe, cozy, beautiful, and adjacent to landscape that seemed to be quickly disappearing due to the onslaught of urban industrial capitalism.⁵⁹¹

Yet, the incoming, developing catastrophe of Anthropocentric climate change and its relation to what seems like indomitable global desires for endless capital accumulation demands that we fully critique the deep articulations of modern (bio)power and desires to regulate bodies and their activities. These planners were anti-capitalist in the sense that they were alarmed with the state of everyday urban working class life, housing, and health. They did not truly consider, however, the cultural politics of their nostalgic visions of health and nature, nor whether their visions privileged particular idealized embodied forms and subjectivities. In their

⁵⁹¹ Parker and Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home*.

quest to combat capitalism's impact on the urban environment, they neglected to consider whether their idealizations of the past were causing them to socially construct and reproduce a particularly bourgeois and biopolitical relation to healthy living. This, ultimately, is where the international garden city movement failed. Rather than express a "peaceful path" to "renting" the world, as French philosopher Michel Serres might put it—a rethinking of hominization as a way of re-establishing natural symbiosis with the environmental and non-human in ways that blur the boundaries between—the Garden City signified a new way of rationally reshaping the nature and space according to the demands of modern power.⁵⁹² If I learned anything from this dissertation, it is that continued attempts to establish healthier, more ideal built environments through the controlling and administering of natural and cultural spaces are no more ecologically sustainable than the values of market individualism and capital accumulation.

So as I researched and wrote this dissertation, it occurred to me that the ultimate question I was chasing was deeply personal and politically motivated. When I first encountered and visited Greenbelt, Maryland as a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, I was personally overjoyed with finding a community with such a purposeful, reformist layout, ubiquitous walking paths and playgrounds on each block, houses arranged that conjured visions of co-operation and communal spaces for play and social intercourse, and convenient access to wooded park and green space. My initial reaction was that Greenbelt seemed like the kind of "home"

⁵⁹² Michel Serres, *Malfeasance: Appropriation through Pollution?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

or “livelihood” I hoped to find: somewhere more socially and aesthetically inspiring than the wholesale mundanity and senseless overdevelopment of my suburban upbringing, yet more peaceful and environmentally conscious than the “hustle and bustle” of large cities. Walking around Greenbelt, however, I began to wonder whether a planned community could effect an objectively and ecologically healthier, sustainable relation between city and green space without privileging particular forms and meanings of social, biological and natural life within the planned structuring of the community. Is there a path towards creating an ecologically and socially progressive community form that is not dependent on such biopolitical vectors (conservative/bourgeois mythologizations of a nation’s pre-industrial past, racial/eugenicist/imperialist reactions to the perceived ills of the urban poor, idealization of the farmer as the healthiest form of embodied living)?

In the end, I did not find an answer to this question. If anything, the history of the international garden city movement taught me that the processes of urban and regional planning are fraught with political contingencies, and opportunities for capitalist cooptation and (petty) bourgeois paternalism. I ultimately interpreted the history as evidence of the enduring politics of planning ideal communities based on the assumed healthful qualities of rurality, “wilderness,” “open spaces,” and other socially constructed conceptions of nature. Through this research, I have become acutely aware of how visions of more ideal and ecologically sustainable communities, though often intended as critiques of capitalism, become victims of mythical,

nostalgic visions of “nature” and “natural” spaces for health.⁵⁹³ Social and environmental historians have elucidated the historical politics embedded in people’s nostalgic “reinventions” of a healthier, natural, yet lost past, and how they often function as deeply gendered, racialized, and imperialist narratives within Western culture that buttress, rather than challenge, capitalist social relations.⁵⁹⁴ In their persistent desire to restore nostalgic visions of ideal health through the tools and strategies of modern town planning, garden city planners reproduced and reaffirmed ideological binaries distinguishing “nature” and “culture” and the “human” and the “non-human”, binaries which continue to plague modern environmentalist thought. Though British and American garden city planners presented their community layouts as a blueprint for remedying capitalism’s onslaught on housing and urban environments, their aversion to contemporary class struggles led them to administer each community according to what they imagined was a healthy, content, co-operative, democratic citizen. The Garden City ideal, as a result, was prisoner to the planners’ class politics and prejudices towards particular forms of livelihood. Far from establishing some kind of ecosophical harmony within a well thought-out built

⁵⁹³ For example, in 2007 noted American environmentalist Bill McKibben wrote a book titled *Deep Economy* and argued for the creation of ecologically sustained, small-scale economies as a means of checking the ecological and social damage wrought by the unrestrained growth of capital and the production of wealth and wealth inequalities. He wasn’t calling for the dissolving of markets, but rather their localization, so that people could live in happier circumstances and make sustainable, ecologically friendly changes to their everyday habits. His arguments were a critique of market capitalist assumptions of the virtues of unchecked accumulation, but his solution harmonized with the arguments of Ebenezer Howard’s garden city ideal. Yet, much like the problems encountered in the planning of garden cities and greenbelts, McKibben’s community-based solution rested on an ironic understanding that pre-capitalist life was healthier and happier, for not only were people free from the ideological grips of capital accumulation and the constant need for “more,” they lived in communities that fostered social interaction and a mutual relationship with the local environment. McKibben’s vision of future sustainable communities was dependent on the ahistorical view that pre-capitalist, pre-urban living was healthy living. See Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (New York: Times Books, 2007), 1-4.

⁵⁹⁴ Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*, 1-8.

environment, garden cities functioned as the spatial handmaidens of capitalist ideology, and offer precious little detail on how to plan a community without reproducing the underlying capitalist logic of “town” and “country” that continues to wreak havoc on the global environment.⁵⁹⁵

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⁵⁹⁵ By “ecosophy,” I refer to Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess’ explication of “Deep Ecology” and writings on the moral philosophy of ecological harmony. Naess viewed humans as an integral element of a totalizing “Nature”, but not on anthropocentric grounds. Naess’ “Deep Ecology” emphasized the moral value of non-human beings, and sought a mode of living based on such ecological principles. See Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. David Rothenberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

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